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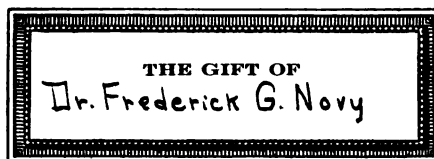
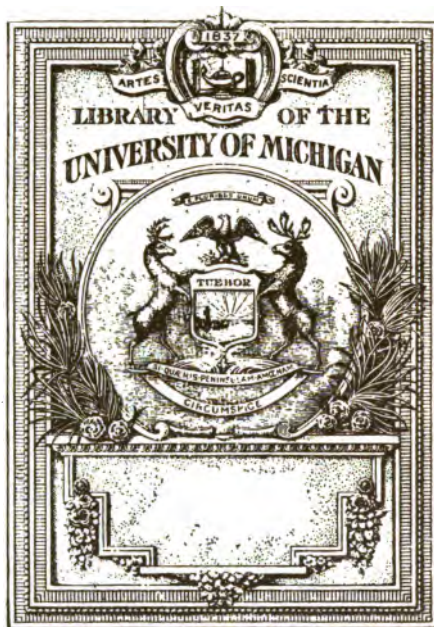
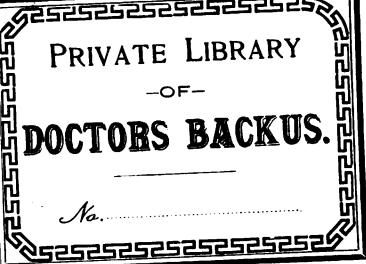
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THE  
GREAT SALVATION

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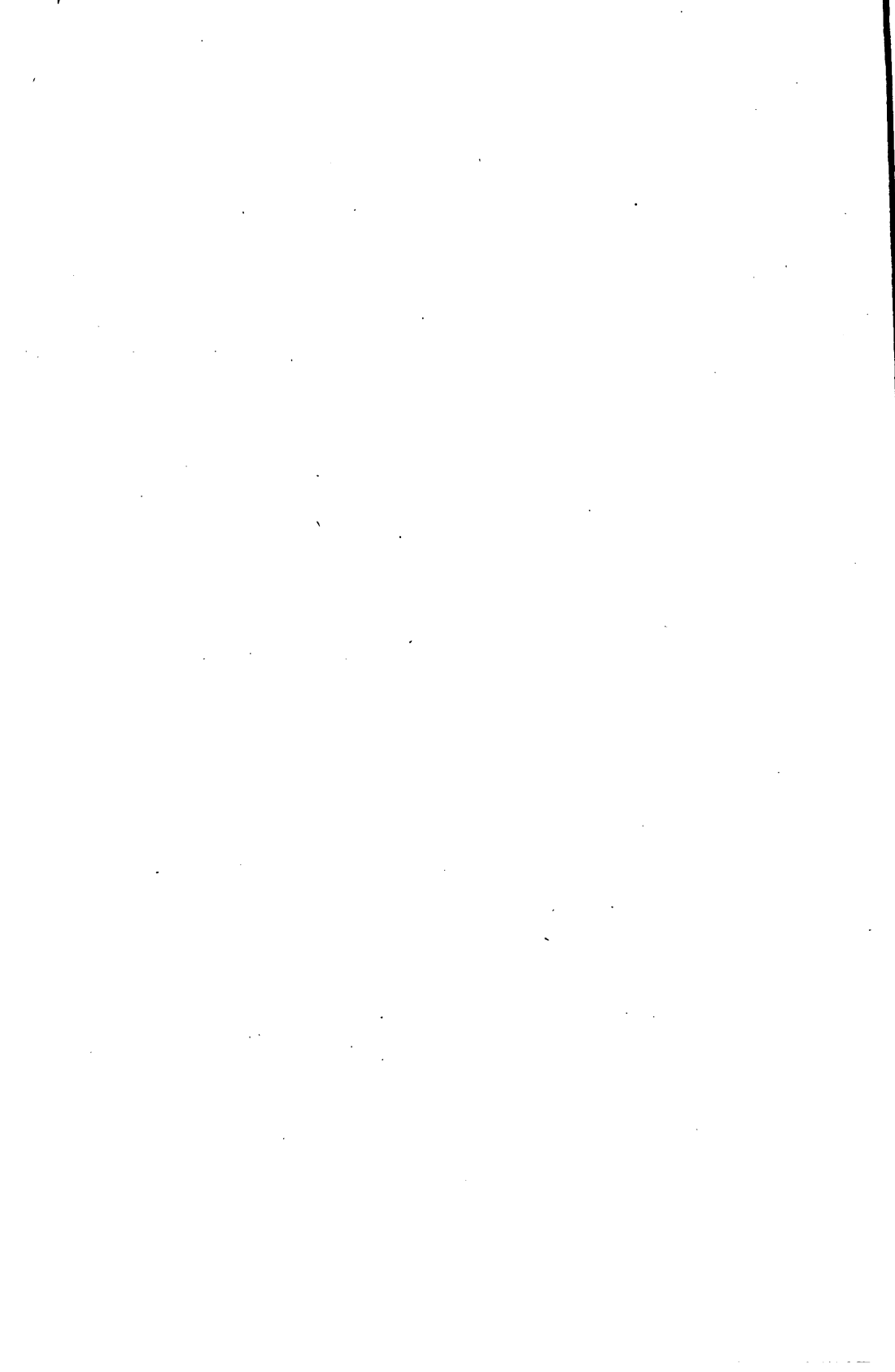
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# DEDICATION.

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THIS VOLUME IS GRATEFULLY AND LOVINGLY DEDICATED:

TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER, WHO LEAVE  
TO THEIR CHILDREN THE RICHEST POSSIBLE  
LEGACY IN THEIR LIVES OF PATIENT INDUS-  
TRY, CHEERFUL SELF-DENIAL, AND UNWAY-  
ERING FAITH IN GOD. MAY THE LORD BE  
GRACIOUS TO THEM IN THEIR DECLINING  
YEARS, AND MAKE THE EVENING TIME LIGHT  
WITH HIS CHEERING PRESENCE.



## INTRODUCTION.

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1. Every institution, whether secular or religious, has certain fundamental principles that determine its character, and out of which everything connected with it of a practical nature naturally and necessarily springs. In order to a clear and comprehensive view of the system, it is of the utmost importance to obtain a proper understanding of its great elementary fundamental principles. These truths find strong confirmation when applied to the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. In order to a clear understanding of its character, and an adequate conception of its practical applications and possible blessings, a knowledge of certain fundamental matters called "First Principles" is imperative. It is the purpose of this volume to give, not, perhaps, an exhaustive, but a somewhat comprehensive, view of The First Principles of the Gospel of Christ, beginning with a consideration of the recognized moral malady of sin, thence passing onward to a study of the divine remedy as revealed in the gospel, thus tracing the path in the progress of the soul from the state of depravity even unto the blessed consummation of a perfect character; or, in other words, considering the steps in the journey of man from the "Paradise Lost" to the "Paradise Regained."

2. This discussion, as has already been intimated, can not be exhaustive. Each elementary principle entering into this

complex system is so comprehensive in its intention, so vast in its extension, so important in its practical bearing, so complicated in its relations, that a volume might well be devoted to it instead of a single chapter, and the embarrassment resulting from the necessary limitations imposed by the plan of this work can readily be understood.

3. We are well aware that such a discussion as the one proposed, and set forth in the following pages, is by no means a new thing. Many books have been written on "First Principles," but there are reasons why this work should be done again and again. Every generation must, to some extent, rewrite its own books, just as it must preach anew its own sermons, and discuss again the old questions of social and political life. Henry Ward Beecher, in the Introduction to his *Life of Christ*, says, in justification of such a work, confronted as he was with more than a hundred lives of Christ: "Our age has developed wants no deeper, perhaps, nor more important, than those of the apostolic age, but needs essentially different. We live for different ends, we have other aspirations. We are plagued with new infidelities of our own, we are proud in our own way, and vain after our own manner. To meet all these everchanging necessities of the human heart and of society, men are ordained to preach the gospel. If merely reading the text as it was originally delivered were enough, why should there be preachers? It is the business of preachers to readapt truth from age to age to man's ever-renewing wants. And what is this but doing, by single passages, what a *Life of Christ* attempts to do systematically and in some dramatic form for the whole." The principle

involved in the view thus clearly and sensibly expressed seems to me to be a very general one. If it holds good with respect to single passages of God's Word, and justifies a rewriting of the life of Christ again and again, does it not hold, with equal force, in favor of a restatement of the great plan of salvation as a whole, or as it finds its embodiment in certain component factors and elementary principles? This attempt in no way reflects on previous statements or discussions of the subject, but it simply recognizes and proceeds upon the principle that truth needs to be repeatedly restated and set in its relations to everchanging conditions. Old truth thus becomes ever new. If I may succeed in even a measurable degree in such a restatement of this great question as shall meet the new conditions, my hope will be abundantly realized. I do not expect to present new truth (this, in the very nature of the case, would be impossible and undesirable), but to adapt the old truth to somewhat new and changed conditions, and possibly view it from some new angles of vision, and out of the midst of new experiences.

4. But the reasons that have prompted the preparation of this volume are not entirely set forth by this general statement. During the last seven years we have attempted to give the whole body of students in Hiram College general lines of Bible instruction, aiming to furnish a somewhat comprehensive knowledge of the Bible in its broader features—such a knowledge as, in our judgment, every person laying claim to a liberal education ought to possess. The divisions of the book, and the purpose of each; the writings as viewed in their literary aspects; the three great dispensations, and their

relations to each other; the separate books, and the purpose of each, all this, and much more of a less general character, has been given to the whole body of students in the form of lectures and syllabi in a somewhat logical and systematic order. In the development of this purpose we were naturally led to consider "The Great Salvation," which constitutes the marrow and fatness of the divine revelation, since Jesus Christ the Saviour is the central figure. This volume is simply the presentation of this great subject in a way, we hope, that is reasonably adapted to the wants of the general Bible student. It was intended, primarily, for the students of Hiram College, but we trust that it may be found helpful (1) to young Christians who are seeking to build themselves up in a knowledge of spiritual truth, that thus they may be more fully equipped for the high service to which they have been called; (2) to Sunday-school and Bible class teachers, both as a means of personal preparation and as a class-room text-book; (3) to young men and women who are preparing for active service in the ministerial calling, whether as preachers or as teachers of the Word of God. With the hope and prayer that these results may be, at least in some measure, secured, this book is sent forth upon its mission.

# THE GREAT SALVATION.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SIN AND ITS CURE.

**Introduction:** 1. The doctrine of trinity seems to be one of very wide application. Illustrations are found on every hand, both in nature and revelation.

(1) There is a trinity in the Deity: In creation there is God, Word, and Spirit; in redemption, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is in harmony with the declaration of John, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

(2) There is a trinity in our material world: The sea, earth, and sky constitute the sources from which man draws the three-fold supply necessary to sustain life, viz.: water, food, and air.

(3) There is a trinity in man's nature or being: He is composed of body, soul, and spirit; or of physical, intellectual, and spiritual factors.

(4) There is also a trinity in human history: The history of the race, as revealed in the Bible, is made up of a period of innocence, a period of sinfulness or depravity, and a period of virtue; at least this is true of a portion of the race that passes the age of accountability. The same is true of individual history: There is a period of innocence, a period of sin, and potentially a period of virtue for each individual man.

Holiness, as a term, may be applied to either innocence or virtue, or both. There is holy innocence and holy virtue, but the two are by no means identical. In speaking of holiness,



the distinction between innocence and virtue should always be observed.

2. Each state entering into this triune history is reached by three successive and logically related steps :

(1) Holy innocence results when God alone speaks and man hears, believes, and obeys ; or, in other words, when man moves in harmony with God's will, not as the result of choice, but because there is no conflicting voice. This was the condition of man before he fell. There was but one voice of authority, and that was the voice of God, and he obeyed it.

However, this view of the case is not entirely exhaustive. Holy innocence may be a purely negative excellence. It may simply be freedom from harm or guilt, because the individual knows no distinction between right and wrong. He has never chosen the one or the other simply because he can not discriminate between them. Even should he do a thing wrong in itself, to him it would not be wrong, because he is incapable of making moral distinctions. Such persons are not accountable. They are without sin, and hence they are not under condemnation. All infants, before they reach the age at which they can discriminate between right and wrong, belong to this class, and are, consequently, without sin. As soon as they pass this point, innocence is no longer possible. Two conflicting voices speak to them, and they must obey the one or the other from choice. In either case, innocence is no longer possible.

(2) Depravity results when both God and Satan speak, and man hears, believes and obeys Satan ; or, in other words, when right and wrong are presented, and man chooses the wrong instead of the right. This is true even though the choice of the heart may not find expression in word or act. The outward expression is, in fact, but the sign of the inward condition.

(3) Holy virtue results when both God and Satan speak, and man hears, believes, and obeys God ; or, when right and wrong

are presented, and man chooses the right in preference to the wrong. This is, therefore, a condition very superior to that of innocence. It is the result of choice. It is positive. It results from effort, from struggle, from the overcoming of evil propensities and desires. To achieve it involves a warfare, often severe and long continued.

3. In studying man's possible moral states, it is necessary to consider three wills—God's will, man's will, and Satan's will.

(1) When the former two coincide without opportunity for choice on man's part, or because the individual knows no distinction between right and wrong, innocence is the result.

(2) When the latter two coincide from choice on man's part, depravity is the result. The individual is guilty, and is therefore under condemnation. Having reached the period of accountability, he is held responsible for his choice.

(3) When the former two coincide from choice on man's part, virtue is the result. Condemnation is removed, because, as an accountable being, the individual chooses the right and does it.

In this view of the case the will of God is the fountain of order, harmony and blessedness. Man is saved so long as he is in harmony with that will. Involuntary harmony is the salvation of innocence; voluntary harmony is the salvation of virtue.

In the study of the Divine revelation we discover,—

I. That the great purpose of God is the salvation of man.

1. This salvation involves the bringing of man's will into harmony with the will of God, the fountain of true blessedness.

(1) In the universe of matter, order and harmony reign, because God's will, the fountain of order and harmony, is supreme. Matter, having no will of its own, moves in harmony

with God's will as impressed upon the whole physical creation. The laws of nature are nothing more than the impressed will of God. Matter exercises no choice. One will alone operates, and that is God's will.

(2) Not so, however, in the universe of mind. Salvation can not be accomplished by the direct, immediate and sovereign act of God. Man must be brought to move and act in harmony with God's will, in the free exercise of his own will. He must do so from choice, and not from necessity. Salvation, therefore, in the highest and fullest sense, results in virtue. Innocence, in a certain sense, is salvation, but not in the highest sense. The ultimate goal of the great salvation is virtue, in so far as it pertains to the subjective condition of the individual.

2. This is reached in harmony with man's physical, intellectual and moral nature.

(1) It recognizes the dignity and importance of the body, and, consequently, it involves the principles of physical well-being. It provides for the proper and lawful gratification of the normal physical appetites, propensities, and desires. It subordinates the lower physical nature to the higher intellectual and spiritual nature. If there is a schism between the body and spirit, the body must yield. Hence says Paul, "I keep my body under."

(2) It recognizes the constitutional elements of the soul; it provides food for the intellectual nature; it addresses man's intelligence; it furnishes stimulants and excitants for man's emotional nature; it lays a firm hold upon the heart; it influences the will by means of argument, admonition, warning and motive.

By this means man's will is brought into harmony with God's will, and salvation is the result. God's will is supreme. Man is subordinate, but it is a willing subordination. He is obedient, but it is the obedience resulting from deliberate choice.

3. This salvation recognizes three actual or possible human states or conditions.

(1) It views man as naturally holy through innocence. It regards this as man's condition by virtue of his creation, and it is the only kind of holiness that can result from mere creation. Man obeyed God's voice because he had no choice. There was no alternative presented. No other voice spoke to him. As long as this holiness continued, man was happy. Holiness and happiness stand in the relation of cause and effect. Happiness is always an effect produced by adequate cause, and this cause is always and everywhere holiness. This view of the case reveals the folly of seeking for happiness in things external to the individual.

"If happiness have not her seat and center in the breast,  
We may be wise, or rich, or great, but never can be blessed."

(2) It is based on the fact that man is actually depraved. Two conflicting voices spoke to man, thus presenting to him the opportunity of choice. One was the voice of God, the other was the voice of Satan. Man, in the exercise of his freedom, chose to hear, believe, and obey Satan. Herein is sin. Man refuses to be obedient to the will of God, the fountain of order. Disorder and confusion are introduced into the moral universe. It follows, therefore, that the consequences of sin are very far reaching and terrible. Who can understand them? Evidently God alone, and he alone, can provide the remedy. Whatever pertains to the changing of man's depraved nature, and the consequent relations to God growing out of such change, God must specify. The disease is entirely too deep-seated for human prescription to reach. As holiness produces happiness, it follows that the loss of holiness involves the loss of happiness; hence sin is the cause of wretchedness and misery. The solution of the problem how to make man holy, is a solution of the problem how to make man happy.

Here is a fact that all reformers and philanthropists should recognize.

(3) It proceeds on the assumption that man can be made holy through virtue. When man, in the exercise of his freedom, with the alternatives of right and wrong placed before him, chooses to hear, believe, and obey God, the holiness of virtue is the result. Then man comes into possession, not of the innocence lost by disobedience, but of virtue gained by the triumph of right over wrong, or by the triumph of the principle of obedience to God over the principle of disobedience. Man again moves in harmony with the Divine will from choice, and consequently he is saved.

The Bible presents two beautiful pictures of man: one is the picture of innocence, when man, in his Eden home, walked with God, before the voice of the tempter came to him; the other is a picture of virtue, when man, in the Paradise regained, again stands in the presence of God. How thrilling are the prophetic words:

Who are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?  
 . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

#### 4. This salvation contemplates a threefold blessing:

(1) Salvation from the guilt of sin. Man, having chosen to disobey God, is guilty. All sin is sin against God. When we sin against our fellow man, or even against ourselves, it is none the less sin against God. God holds proprietorship in all things, and he is the only proprietor in the universe. Guilt attaches to the soul until God forgives. Pardon is, therefore, a great necessity, and this is one of the great blessings of salvation.

(2) Salvation from the practice of sin. Salvation contemplates a life of goodness or obedience. This does not mean that man can live an absolutely perfect or sinless life. It

simply means that man's will is brought in harmony with God's will. If he sin, it is not the result of deliberate purpose, but of sudden impulse under the strain of great temptation. It is not the outgrowth of the governing principle of life, but contrary to it. The will and desire harmonize with the will and desire of God. Sin causes intense contrition and a crying unto God for pardon and deliverance. By this means sinful habits are overcome, and a life of holiness developed. A character such as God approves is the result.

(3) Salvation from the consequences of sin. How much is involved in this, who can tell? To follow the line of Mr. Drummond's reasoning, life is correspondence to environment. When this correspondence is lacking, death results. When the physical organs correspond or respond to their environment, life is the result. When the ear responds to sound, the eye to light, the lungs to air, etc., the organism is alive. When this correspondence is broken off, death ensues.

God is the true and proper environment of the soul. Sin separates between man and God. The soul no longer corresponds to its proper environment, and spiritual death results. The sinner is, therefore, said to be dead in trespasses and sin. Of the saved it is said their lives are "hid with Christ in God." To save man, therefore, means to deliver him from death, both here and hereafter; or, in other words, it means to bestow on man the gift of eternal life. Hence the language of the apostle: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." In this threefold blessing man's highest good is obtained. The best human conditions are realized, the noblest character is developed, and the happiest destiny is secured. In short, man's highest possibilities are attained.

5. This salvation involves a threefold Divine work:

(1) Instruction: Paul declares that the Gentiles are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in

them." He also said to the Athenians that, "The times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent." The history of the introduction of sin into the world bears testimony to the same fact. Man, ignorant, untried, without experience, knowing neither the nature nor consequences of sin, believed Satan and fell. Our own experience corroborates this statement. We are cursed by our ignorance. We sin largely by reason of ignorance. Here is our first great weakness. The first thing, therefore, that God proposes is instruction. He reveals to us the nature and consequences of sin, our condition, our relations to each other and to him, and his great purposes concerning us. In all this the need of a prophet (teacher) is seen. Some one must bring the divine message to us.

(2) Pardon : Here is man's next great need. This involves a sovereign act of God, but there must be some grounds on which it can righteously be bestowed. Furthermore, our connection with God is broken by sin; some one must appear in the presence of God for us as our mediator. He must present such offering as will justify God in justifying the believer. Here is seen man's need of a priest.

(3) Rule and guidance : The inferior must ever be subordinate to the superior, hence the mineral is subordinate to the vegetable, the vegetable to the animal, the irrational animal to man, and man should be subject to God. In this fact lies the principle that makes rule or kingship necessary. In man, the inferior or lower nature should be subject to the superior or higher nature; hence every man is a kingdom within himself, and since there is a higher power than man, each should be a subject of the highest or heavenly rule. We therefore need a king.

This idea of kingship not only implies subordination of the lower to the higher, or the rule of the kingly power, but it also implies protection. If it is the duty of the subject to

obey, it is the duty of the king to protect the subject against all enemies too strong for him. Satan, man's great enemy, has been too strong for him. He has locked the mightiest in his prison-house of death. We need, as a king, some one strong enough to vanquish Satan, and to break open the prison-house of death and set the captives free. God has, consequently, ever sought to provide for man prophet, priest, and king, thus meeting man at his three great points of weakness, and, therefore, of deepest need.

**II. That this purpose of God moves to its final realization through three great Divine dispensations.**

Each dispensation constitutes a majestic step in a movement that culminates in human redemption.

1. The first step in this sublime and progressive unfolding of the Divine purpose is called the Patriarchal Dispensation. It is merely initiatory. God gives light, but it is comparatively dim, and the light is confined to a small circle. It was given to a few families that constituted a line of descent from Adam to Moses. God did not give the full light, because the world was not ready for a complete revelation. The fullness of time had not come. The full light consists in a complete revelation of God, but for this the world was not yet prepared. Conditions had to be matured through centuries and millenniums before the coming one could appear who would "manifest God in the flesh," which is the only revelation perfectly adapted to man. In the meantime, revelation must keep pace with the developments in human nature and human condition. The time had not yet come for the Sun of Righteousness to arise, but the gross darkness could, in some measure, be dispelled by the glimmering starlight and the fuller moonlight of preparatory dispensations. During these ages of unfolding plan and purpose, the salvation enjoyed by the elect few came through the three offices of prophet, priest, and king, as, in



fact, it must necessarily come under all dispensations. When man's threefold want is met, salvation is the result, and this is accomplished through prophet, or instructor ; priest, or mediator ; and king, or ruler.

We are cursed by our ignorance, alienated or separated from God by sin, and impotent to deliver ourselves from the bondage of our great enemy, Satan. His power must be broken by a ruler mightier than he. This deliverance culminates in a triumph over death. When this victory is achieved, the climax of salvation is reached ; hence, when man's three great wants are met, salvation is complete.

Owing to the limited revelation possible during this early period, and also on account of the simple nature of the worship and the limited number embraced in the scope of the divine plan, these offices were centered in one man during the patriarchal dispensation. He was the head of the family, which consisted of the patriarch and his children, and their families, together with domestics and servants of various kinds. The patriarch, therefore, exercised the functions of the prophet, priest, and king. This order of things continued until the conditions had matured, when God could take the second step in his majestic progress toward the accomplishment of his great purpose.

2. We are thus led to consider next the Mosaic dispensation. During this period God moved forward toward the realization of his final purpose through a single nation. Instead of one family line, there are now many tribes and families elected for the carrying forward of God's great design, all, however, belonging to a common stock, and descended from a common ancestor, Abraham. He was called out by God from his own kindred and people, and made the recipient of two great promises—one of a temporal nature, looking to the establishment of a great nation through which God designed to work out and complete his great scheme of redemption, and one of a

spiritual nature, looking to the establishment of a great spiritual kingdom, whose blessings were intended for all men, and to which the temporal kingdom that embraced the seed of Abraham stood in the relation of a means to an end. During this dispensation, salvation, although prospective rather than actual (which was also the case in the previous dispensation), came through the same three offices of prophet, priest, and king; but owing to the changed conditions, as well as for other reasons, the offices were clearly differentiated, and the duties of each vested in a distinct class. The changed conditions demanding the separating out of these offices were, —

(1) The fuller revelation which was now needed, and which it was possible to give.

(2) The more elaborate religious system made necessary, in part at least, by the demands of God's unfolding plans for type and symbol; and,

(3) The far more burdensome duties pertaining to the office of ruler, owing to the fact that his authority now extended over a great nation instead of over a family. During this dispensation, the great key-word is prophecy—prophecy both in its broad sense as teaching, and in its narrower or predictive sense, including verbal utterance and type.

This predictive prophecy constitutes much of the literature and more of the outward worship of the elect nation. During the greater part of this dispensation, God erected a line of finger-boards pointing forward to that for which all that went before in the Divine arrangements existed, and for which it was ordained and created. By this means a universal expectancy was created. A Messiah was the desire of the nations.

3. We are thus led to the third, or Christian, dispensation, which is the final step in the accomplishment of God's great plan of salvation.

In this the Divine purpose of salvation is realized. Here we reach the climax of Divine wisdom, mercy, and love. No

longer are the blessings of salvation prospective and circumscribed to a few families or a single nation; hence says the apostle, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." Here the blessing contemplated comes as before, through the three offices of prophet, priest, and king, but they are again centered in one person. Instead of several families, or a nation composed of many families, there is to be but one family, and Jesus is the head. This family potentially embraces the whole race, thus recognizing the universal brotherhood of man. Nor is this family relationship to be disturbed by the incident of death, and therefore the whole family in heaven and earth is named for Christ, who is the head.

This climax of blessing secured through the three great offices of prophet, priest, and king, which are centered in Christ, contemplates the purifying of the human heart, the pardon of human guilt, the regulating of the outward life, the uniting of the broken connection between man and God, thus bringing about a new relationship, the marrying of the human and divine through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a redemption from the grave, and finally a home in the paradise of God. It is no wonder, therefore, that the inspired writer calls it a "great salvation."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION; HOW SHOWN AND HOW DESTROYED.

**Introduction :** 1. The dispensation of Christ is preëminently spiritual. Christ is a spiritual King, and citizenship in his kingdom is secured through spiritual birth, and maintained through spiritual union with the spiritual head. The Christian has the promise of the Holy Spirit as an abiding guest and comforter, which constitutes the crowning blessing of the new institution.

2. In referring to this subject, the apostle has frequent use for the term "glorious." He calls the dispensation glorious; the church, glorious; its liberty, glorious; its gospel, glorious, and its destiny is called glory.

All this points to the immense superiority of the spiritual dispensation, and leads us naturally to consider,—

**I. The points wherein Christianity rises supremely above all other dispensations of Divine grace.**

1. This superiority is shown in the relation that Christianity sustains to the preceding dispensations.

(1) These institutions must not be regarded in the light of successive experiments.

God does not work tentatively. Empiricism has no place in the Divine economy. Such methods imply ignorance on the part of those who employ them. The Patriarchal Dispensation was not an experiment on the part of God, nor was the Mosaic. God knew just what could be accomplished by each before they were tried, and it is safe to say that each

accomplished all that God intended or expected. The Patriarchal Dispensation passed away when it had fulfilled its purpose. The Mosaic Dispensation was introduced, not because the former had failed, but because a work had to be done which the former could not do. Another step in a majestic progress had to be taken. Owing to the changed conditions and the farther work needed, a new dispensation had to be inaugurated. This dispensation was in no sense a second trial on God's part to save men. It was simply a second step in the working out of the great Divine plan. God understood the nature of Judaism, and he knew just what it could and would accomplish. It was perfect for its purpose, as was also the Patriarchal.

(2) These dispensations may be regarded as both perfect and imperfect, and, in fact, they are so regarded in the Scriptures.

They are perfect; that is, each was perfectly adapted to its own place and its own work. They are not tentative efforts on God's part, but absolute and positive steps, each perfect for its own work, and each strong in its work.

They are also imperfect; that is, they are not final. They can not accomplish God's great and final purpose, the salvation of man, except as preparatory steps. They were limited and circumscribed in nature and design. Viewed as final systems, they were imperfect. So the Apostle Paul reasons, and he justifies the introduction of the new or Christian Dispensation on the ground of this imperfection. Illustrations of this truth are very abundant. The scaffolding of a building may be very perfect for its purpose, but it is not final. It would be a very imperfect house. A boy is very perfect if viewed as a boy, but very imperfect if viewed as a man. The blossom is very perfect if viewed as a blossom, but very imperfect if viewed as fruit. So the first two dispensations are very perfect, for their purpose, but imperfect as final systems of salvation.

(3) This brings us to see the superiority of the Christian Dispensation. It is final. It is the realization of God's great purpose. It is the building of which the former dispensations were but the scaffolding. It is the fruit of which the former were but the blossom. As the boy is prophetic of the man, the blossom of the fruit, so were the former dispensations prophetic of the final.

(4) We should, however, be on our guard lest we fall into error just at this point. We must not suppose that the different dispensations are, after all, but one dispensation in its different stages of development. These dispensations are related, but distinct. Each had its own promises, its own purposes, its own outward rites and ceremonies, and its own spirit. Each was a distinct and separate institution. True, they all have something in common. The great moral principles are necessarily the same in all, since these can never change, and they are bound together by one great final purpose that moves majestically forward to its accomplishment through these successive steps. The first two are circumscribed in the very necessity of the case. Their provisions, requirements and blessings are limited to a few families or a single nation, but the moment we reach the third, all restrictions fall off. The provisions, requirements and blessings are as broad as humanity. We seem to have passed out from under a narrow ceiling into the universe spanned by God's great sky, and the most natural thing in the world is the music of the great Commission: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

2. This superiority is shown by the perfection witnessed in this dispensation in the necessary and fundamental offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, as embodied in Christ.

(1) God, through his prophets, had given his chosen people much great truth. He had taught many great and necessary lessons, but the revelation was by no means complete. All of God's prophets shone by a borrowed light. The best

was but a very imperfect embodiment of his own truth, and each was very limited in his message. The deepest questions of the soul still remained unanswered. As the seven elementary colors that compose light unite in the focus or lens to form the perfect light, so Christ was the focus in which all the elements of truth unite to form the perfect light. He shone, not by a borrowed light, but was himself the source of the light. He was the Sun of Righteousness; consequently he said, "I am the truth." It is said that "his life was the light of men." His truth was no better than his life, for both were perfect. The latter was a complete outward manifestation of the former. There has been some discussion as to how far the Mosaic dispensation taught the doctrine of immortality. There can be no question of this kind raised in regard to Christianity. Jesus was most explicit and clear in his utterances on the subject, and he gave a practical demonstration by descending into hades and coming forth a triumphant conqueror, bringing life and immortality to light.

(2) Under the first two dispensations, animal sacrifice constituted an important element in the worship. The high priest made an offering of blood, in the most holy place in the temple, for his own sin, and also for the sins of the people. This, however, was not final. No sins were actually taken away. There was a remembrance made again of sin every year. How imperfect, therefore, was all this. The high priest was imperfect, and, consequently, had to make an offering for himself; and his work was imperfect, since it could not take away sin. It merely pointed forward to a sacrifice that would be efficacious. Under the Christian Dispensation all is changed. Christ, our High Priest, is perfect. He needs not to offer a sacrifice for his own sin. His sacrifice is perfect. With his own blood he appeared in the presence of God to make an atonement once for all. Through this blood sins are actually taken away. They are remembered no more.

(3) The same perfection is seen in the kingly office. Under the old dispensation, kings were corrupt, ambitious, and selfish. Their rule was frequently unjust and tyrannical, and often they were impotent to protect their people. We, however, have a King who rules in justice, mercy, and love. His requirements are perfectly reasonable. He has all power. He has vanquished the great enemy of men, and is ever mighty to help and strong to deliver. Oftentimes kings have been far inferior to some of their subjects in wisdom and purity, but Jesus Christ, on the ground of inherent excellence, can claim the preëminence. Before him the wisest and purest may well cover their faces in shame. He is King, not only by reason of the authority vested in him, but by reason of his inherent dignity, majesty, and power.

3. This superiority is shown by the perfection seen in the method of developing and regulating character and life.

(1) There are two ways to regulate or govern human conduct. One is by means of formulated rules and regulations, embodying positive commands and prohibitions that cover the whole circle of human activities. Human actions are hedged in on one side by positive, and on the other by negative, precepts. By this means a certain line of conduct is secured, and life is determined in so far as it consists of external acts. There is, however, another way to govern life that secures much better results. Instead of written laws covering every action of life, great dominant principles are planted in the heart, out of which all actions spring. The individual does this or refrains from doing that not because he can find some precept, positive or negative, determining his action, but by reason of an inward governing principle. For instance, a man may be kept from killing and stealing by laws saying, "Thou shalt not," to which certain penalties are attached, or he may be restrained by the principles of love and honesty. That the latter is far superior to the former, no one will for a moment



question. He is not the highest type of man who does right things, or refrains from wrong things, simply because he can find a specific law governing the case. Law may be very necessary, but law of itself can not develop the highest character. The outward law is necessary until the inward principle has been planted within the heart.

(2) Judaism was largely a system of law. It consisted of a multitude of rules and regulations pertaining to things great and small. There are laws embodying great moral principles, and laws pertaining to the minutest details of life. Social, civil, and religious duties are specified. It was preëminently a system of "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." By this it is not meant that the Mosaic economy exhausted itself in a code of rules and regulations for the children of Israel. Much of it was typical of the coming King and kingdom, and the worship consisted, not merely of external formalities, but had a deep spiritual significance. Still it remains true that its method of regulating human action was legalistic, and consequently imperfect. It was burdensome in the multitude of its details and specifications, and in the fact that all obedience in letter simply is a bondage. The Apostle Peter calls it "A yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." Its imperfection is also shown in the fact that it could not develop highest character as its natural fruit, consequently the writer of Hebrews declares, "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we drew nigh unto God."

(3) Christianity is a very different system. Here all action, to have any value, must spring from inner principles, or, as it is frequently expressed, from the heart. Christ showed that murder, adultery, and other immoralities consisted not alone in external acts, but in inward wicked desires. As wrong conduct results from a corrupt heart, so right conduct must have its fountain within; consequently Paul says to the

Corinthians: "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." When right conduct thus becomes the product of inward principles, all slavery or bondage disappears. We are made "free from the law," because we are governed on the high ground of principle. Service becomes a pleasure whenever it becomes a service of love. He can not be a Christian in any high sense who requires a rule and a law for every act of Christian life. Those who demand it are living two thousand years too late. They belong to the Mosaic age, and, unfortunately, there are many such Christians in our day. These principles are illustrated in the way a wise father governs his children of various ages. He puts the little child under law. He says, "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not," and stops not to give reasons, because the child can not understand them. The child must learn to obey because it is commanded, which is a great and necessary lesson. After the child is well grown, and has reached the point where he can reason, the father does not try to govern on mere authority, but assigns reasons for his commands. He probably gives but few commands, because he expects the child to do right on the high ground of principle. The laws of right and wrong are now supposed to have been written on the heart. The necessity for verbal commands or outward law disappears to the extent that this is true. The child is now free from the law, and yet he obeys it better than when he was under bondage of the law. So God has proceeded in the development of his great salvation. He put an infant nation, just emerging from a long period of bondage, under law. It was rigid and severe, but it was not a final system. It was only for a time. "The law was added because of transgression until the seed [Christ] should come." It was a restraining influence on the life of the elect nation until the fullness of time should come,

when God would put, not only the elect nation, but all nations under a better teacher than Moses. Therefore, says Paul, "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Under Christ we do right, not because it is written in ink or graven on stone, but because it is written on the heart. Herein lies one of the great points of superiority belonging to the Christian religion. Under this system, the highest types of character are developed and the highest possibilities of the soul reached. This was God's purpose from the beginning, toward which he majestically moved through the preparatory dispensations to its final consummation in Christ.

We are led to consider,—

**II. The misrepresentation of the nature and work of the church, resulting from the misapplication of a beautiful and valuable aphorism: "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent."**

I. As a people, the Disciples have laid great stress on the authority of God's Word. They have been very particular about having "a thus saith the Lord," or "an apostolic precedent" for every item of doctrine or practice. This idea is forcibly embodied in the aphorism to which we have just alluded. In all this they are doubtless fundamentally right, and in harmony with the great theoretic principles of Protestantism expressed by Chillingworth in the motto: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as the religion of Protestants."

This aphorism, however, is capable of gross perversion, and that it has been perverted no one can doubt who is acquainted with the troubles that many churches of Disciples have had over organs, missionary societies, lesson leaves, and other similar questions; nor have these troubles been peculiar to the Disciples. Some of the denominations have had serious difficulties over these and other questions of a kindred nature.

It has been customary to regard all such things as innovations that have come in to destroy the divinely established order of things, and to corrupt the purity and simplicity of the worship. The claim is frequently made that those who oppose these things are moved by conscientious convictions, but that those who favor them do so merely on grounds of expediency. While I believe in the aphorism, when properly understood and applied, yet I am thoroughly convinced that its rigid and indiscriminate application takes out of Christianity one of its great distinguishing excellencies, by which it rises grandly superior to other systems, and utterly disqualifies it for the work which God has set it to accomplish. This beautiful system of Christianity, fragrant with Divine wisdom, and endowed with an element of elasticity, which enables it to adjust itself to ever-changing conditions, and thus move triumphantly onward everywhere, and in all ages, is, by the misapplication of this principle, shorn of its power.

2. The field wherein this aphorism is applicable, is shown by an analysis of the problem that Christianity has to solve.

(1) The religion of Christ has to meet and solve a double or two-sided problem. On the one hand, it has to deal with the question of depraved human nature, and the development of true Christian character, and at the same time it has to consider the question of fluctuating and ever-changing human conditions and circumstances, and adjust itself accordingly. Its great fundamental work lies on the side of human nature, which never changes when left to itself. Human nature, according to the testimony of the Bible and of human consciousness, is depraved. Man is corrupt in heart and life, and, consequently, alienated from God. The disease is radical, and God alone understands it, and can provide the cure. In Christianity we have God's cure. In dealing with this unchanging problem, God has given us the unchanging remedies; consequently, that side of Christianity that pertains

to the changing of corrupt human nature, and the consequent relations to God based upon this change, is rigid and fixed. It changes not, because the problem with which it deals does not change. This side of Christianity has not changed from the beginning, and, in the nature of the case, can not change. God's remedy for changing the corrupt human heart is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. His means of changing the sinful human life is repentance. His appointment for changing the relationship of the alienated sinner is baptism. His means for securing the necessary growth in Christian character is proper food and exercise. These things can never change. God, understanding the disease in its nature and effects, has prescribed the remedy.

(2) But Christianity, in accomplishing this work, comes in contact with ever-changing human conditions. These are never the same. They differ with every locality and almost with every day. It must be at once apparent that the side of Christianity that touches the side of human conditions and circumstances, is in no sense fixed. Here it must be perfectly elastic to enable it to adjust itself in its methods to the ever-changing conditions. Here God does not legislate, because it is impossible and unnecessary. Men are endowed with reason and common sense, and they are left free to adjust their methods to ever-changing conditions in harmony with the dictates of reason and common sense. They are expected to deal with the unchanging problem of human nature by God's unchanging remedies, and to deal with the ever-changing problem of human conditions by ever-changing customs and methods, as the necessities of the case demand, and reason and common sense dictate. Hence, Paul could say, "I become all things to all men." He evidently did not mean that he changed his principles to suit all men. He preached the same old gospel that was intended to deal with the same old human nature; but so far as changing conditions, fashions and customs

were involved, matters in no way involving the human nature or human relationship side of the problem, he could change continually. To apply the beautiful and valuable aphorism of Thomas Campbell, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent," to the human condition side of the problem, is to reduce it to an absurdity. The moment this is done a principle is introduced that will lead to endless division and destroy the work of the church. God does not speak, and by positive law rigidly fix and determine customs and methods that are the necessary outgrowth of changing conditions. To do so would be impossible; but this does not mean that no one may speak. Here is just the field wherein man may speak. Here he may exercise the reason and common sense with which God has endowed him, and adjust customs and methods to the changing conditions, and resort to expedients that circumstances call for. On the unchanging human nature side of the problem, man may speak when God speaks, provided he reiterate what God says; and when God is silent, he must be silent, because in this field he is incompetent to speak. On the changing human condition side of the problem, God does not speak, because it is unnecessary. Here man may speak, because he is competent in this field. God does not dishonor the reason and common sense with which he has endowed man, by speaking in matters that are necessarily determined by changing conditions, and which man is supposed to have sense enough to see and understand.

3. The utter impossibility of applying this aphorism in the field of human conditions, as shown by a few specific examples.

(1) Such an application would take away from us our New Testament as a sacred volume for the use of God's people. There is no "Thus saith the Lord" for creating a single volume by collecting together the apostolic writings, for the most part primarily addressed to individuals and particular churches, and placing it in the hands of God's people as an

authoritative volume. The first Christians had no such volume, and I know of no specific command for creating it. In its present form it is the outgrowth of human conditions. The various books were written by inspired men for various purposes, some to individuals, and some to churches, and some to Christians scattered abroad. So long as the churches received the immediate instruction of inspired men, they did not feel the pressing need of having their writings gathered together for general circulation, nor did the apostles themselves need such a volume. They were eye-witnesses of the facts connected with the life of Christ, and having received his personal instructions, and being inspired and specially endowed for their work, they did not need the written histories concerning him. The time came, however, when all these conditions changed. Men had to preach who had never seen Christ, and who had to learn the facts concerning him from some source. This demanded written records, and God had prepared them. Churches no longer had the personal ministry of inspired men, and hence they felt the need of the written inspired instructions. The changed conditions demanded that the inspired records be collected, in order that these various wants might be supplied, and common sense did it without a "Thus saith the Lord." God caused the inspired histories and teachings to be placed in the hands of individuals and churches. Conditions finally caused them to be collected and arranged in a volume for general use.

(2) The application of this principle on the side of human conditions, would destroy every house of worship. The separate house for purposes of instruction and worship is perhaps the lineal descendant of the Jewish synagogue, which probably originated with Ezra, and was itself an outgrowth of conditions. In the history of Christianity, the church building appeared in answer to the demands of human conditions. In the beginning there were no houses of worship, and, so far as

we know, there was no command to erect such buildings. The first Christians in Jerusalem met from house to house. The apostles preached in private houses, in synagogues, in the open air, or wherever opportunity offered. It was all determined by the conditions. Doubtless the building of churches was first determined by conditions. When the disciples became too numerous, in a given place, to meet in some private house, churches were built. Conditions demanded them, and common sense provided them. No "Thus saith the Lord" was required, and none was given. The appointments of the house were also determined by condition, in some measure. Owing to the warm climate, fires were not needed in the houses in Palestine, and, therefore, no provision was made for warming the churches. When Christianity traveled into the northern latitudes, the churches were built after the early models, and, consequently, there was no provision for warming. There was neither precept nor precedent for fire, and fire was omitted; and when, in answer to the demands of human conditions, fire was finally introduced, it resulted in splitting and destroying churches. Men demanded a "Thus saith the Lord," or an approved precedent, and on this rock the church was wrecked. Who were to blame for this lamentable result? Certainly those who so grossly misunderstood the relation of Christ as to demand a "Thus saith the Lord" for things that are the necessary outgrowth of human conditions.

(3) Such application of the principle would cast aside every hymn-book. There is no "Thus saith the Lord" for a book composed of uninspired poetry set to uninspired music. While it is certainly true that Christians can worship God by singing from the hymn-book, there is no express command for any such thing. The hymn-book is the outgrowth of human conditions. Changed conditions and customs made it necessary and possible, and common sense adopted it. True, Christians have the injunction to worship by singing "psalms and hymns



and spiritual songs," but this injunction was not obeyed by using anything resembling a modern hymn-book. Persons can even now obey the injunction without any hymn-book, as I have known preachers to line songs from memory and lead the congregation in singing when conditions made it necessary. The composing of songs for Christian worship has no Scriptural authority. It is the outgrowth of conditions.

(4) If I mistake not, the organ question belongs just here. It is the outgrowth of human conditions. Changed conditions brought it in, and it can be gotten out by reducing conditions to what they were before it came. Whenever conditions demand it, or make it possible, it is manifestly right to introduce it. This is a matter to be determined by reason and sound common sense. It is clearly wrong to force an organ into a church in opposition to conditions and circumstances. It is certainly wrong to keep it out when conditions demand it. If conditions make it necessary or desirable, put it in for conscience sake. If conditions make it undesirable or improper, keep it out for conscience sake.

(5) The question concerning missionary societies can be settled in the same way. The commission says: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Conditions will determine how to carry this out. If a man can not go, let him send some one, or if he can not do this alone, let him associate with himself a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand others; but this will, perhaps, necessitate some system for collecting the money and disbursing it, if many are sent. Here is a missionary society. Human conditions determine it, and common sense provides it. A missionary society is simply the church doing the work laid upon it by adopting methods suited to existing conditions.

(6) In the same way the questions of Lord's day schools, lesson leaves, and young people's societies are determined. All are the outgrowth of human conditions. On the side that

pertains to changing human nature and affecting the relationship to God, everything is fixed, because it must be so; but God does not insult our intelligence by legislating on the side of human conditions; besides, to do so would be manifestly impossible. The instructions would have to be infinite in number and variety to meet the multiform and ever-changing conditions.

4. The attempt to apply this principle to matters growing out of human conditions, has led to endless confusion and puerile nonsense in the name of religion. One man is worried about the position in prayer, desiring the matter to be determined by apostolic precedent or a "Thus saith the Lord." Another thinks the Lord's Supper ought to be celebrated in an upper room. Another, having become accustomed to hearing the preacher line out one line of the song at a time, has imbibed the idea that there is something apostolic about it, and demands a "Thus saith the Lord," when another lines out two lines, whereupon the church splits into the "one-liners" and the "two-liners." Another, never having heard but one part in the music sung, demands a "Thus saith the Lord" when bass and tenor are introduced. I have known good brethren to raise the question as to whether it was right to sing bass. Another, on the ground of apostolic example, demands that after communion a song shall be sung, after which the congregation shall disperse without a benediction. If this is Christianity, it is more legalistic in spirit than Judaism of the most approved Pharisaical sort. Instead of being made free from the law in Christ, we are put under a worse bondage than Judaism ever inflicted. To certain Christians who were clinging to the observance of the Jewish law, or were in danger of being led away from the gospel to Judaism, Paul said: "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Let us heed the injunction, lest we become entangled with a more galling yoke.

Would it not be a pitiable sight to see the church of the living God, which is the bride, the Lamb's wife, and dearer to him than the apple of his eye, shorn of its power and beauty by having injected into it a legalistic spirit utterly foreign to its nature and purpose? Let us resist all such attempts, and guard ourselves against all such tendencies, not simply on the ground of expediency, but on the higher ground of conscience, that the church may stand before the world in all of its matchless perfection, "Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE FULLNESS OF TIME.

**The Question Stated :** Why was Christ's coming so long delayed? Why was not the kingdom of God set up in the days of Adam? Why allow thousands of years to roll by while the world groaned under its awful burden of sin, before offering to man the perfect remedy?

These questions have been propounded by both believers and unbelievers in all ages, and surely they are worthy of a candid answer.

**Introduction :** 1. The divine methods of working are always marked by certain peculiar and striking characteristics.

(1) God always works toward definite and well-understood ends. He knows the end, even from the beginning, and he is never disappointed nor surprised. Every step is a necessary one. There may appear to be counter-currents and retrograde movements in human history, but this is doubtless owing to our limited vision, which often results from our too close proximity to the events. Some particular nation at some particular time may appear to be moving backward, but a more comprehensive view may show that it is making substantial progress. Especially does a large view of the history of the race exhibit this mighty onward and upward movement. A person standing on the bank of a river by an eddy might conclude that the water had turned backward, but a glance at the broader expanse will show the majestic onward sweep of the mighty current. We should not, therefore, judge God's work by little sections. We may be

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looking at some little eddy. Take in the great comprehensive sweep of events, and we shall see a substantial progress.

(2). God never seems to be in undue haste. His progress is majestic, and to us it sometimes seems slow. He took millions of years to fashion and prepare a globe for man's habitation; he takes a century to make a great oak; he takes thirty or forty years to make a man who is to live on earth but threescore years and ten. In the working out of great principles he sometimes occupies millenniums.

There are discoverable reasons for this. First, God does not need to be in a hurry. He has abundance of time at his disposal. We poor mortals must be in a hurry. We have only a few years to stay here. What we do we must do quickly. Not so with God. He is not limited to a little circle of years, but the eternities are his. Second, he moves in harmony with man's intellectual and spiritual constitution. Man can not be moved upon by an immediate and overpowering impulse. Such a method would outrage or destroy judgment, reason, and freedom. Man moves as he is moved upon through his mental powers and capacities. He must be enlightened and persuaded. Many lessons can only be learned by experience. All this involves, in a large degree, the element of time. An individual may learn a lesson in a day that will require a decade or a century for a nation to learn; and one nation may learn a lesson in a generation that will require millenniums for the race to learn. The factor of time necessarily enters into the evolution of great systems of truth.

2. These considerations prepare us for the statement that the time of Christ's appearing was not arbitrarily selected. His coming was not an accident, nor was it chosen at random. Christ said: "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark i. 15). Paul declared: "When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. iv. 4).

The world was ripe for Christ's appearance. Conditions were matured through a process of development extending through millenniums. The foundations of Christianity were laid broad and deep, and the perfect system was reached by a gradually unfolding process. The world was made ready for the coming kingdom by a system of agencies, extending through long ages, and when this preparation was complete, the fullness of time had come.

(3) The gradual preparation must needs have been three-fold. It was necessary that there be lines of spiritual, intellectual and political (involving physical) preparation. (See "New Era," pages 41-53.) God accomplished these results chiefly through the instrumentality of three great nations—the Hebrew, Greek, and Roman. Each had its own peculiar and distinct work. Each wrought out certain great historic lines of events that enter into the general preparation. These lines converge to a single point, which is the focus of all history. At this focal point stands the cross of Christ. All historic lines converge to this, and diverge from this point. Christ is, therefore, the center of all historic movement.

We will briefly note the converging lines that meet at the cross of Christ, and that serve to make it the most conspicuous object in all human history.

**I. The Hebrew nation had accomplished a great work in general preparation.**

1. It had stood as a bulwark against the encroachments of idolatry, which was the greatest moral pestilence of the race.

(1) Idolatry had made its appearance everywhere. It was God's purpose to destroy it. This was absolutely essential to the highest good of man. Idolatry always and everywhere degrades. Under its influence man has ever tended downward. He can never reach his highest possibilities until its roots are

eradicated. Christianity is the farthest possible remove from it. God proposes to make idolatry impossible by planting in the heart of man a seed that shall produce a tree occupying the entire space from which the whole fruitage of life shall be gathered. This seed is simply supreme love to the one true and living God. Christianity, as a system, is intended to plant this seed in a soul and cultivate the heavenly tree, causing it to yield its divine fruitage.

(2) The securing of this result explains God's purpose in much of the history prior to Christ. He sought to eradicate the roots of idolatry from a nation. This was a slow and severe process. It required precept and punishment. Only the most radical measures were sufficient to accomplish the result. Also, the nation was sometimes used as an executioner upon other incorrigible idolatrous nations. By these various processes a people was finally developed who were free from idolatry.

Thus the preparation that was needed for the spiritual religion was secured. There was formed a nucleus of prepared persons. "Standing ground was prepared for the heralds of Christianity."

2. The Messianic idea had been kept alive and developed by means of prophetic utterances, although it was grossly misunderstood. The eyes of the nation were looking with expectancy to the promised One. This desire and expectancy having increased as the time advanced, were very intense when Christ appeared.

3. The conception of the one eternal, self-existent, holy, and perfect God had been developed. It required many and diverse lessons, and a long period of time, to develop this idea, but it was finally accomplished, and it constitutes to-day one of the richest inheritances that the past has contributed to the world. It is the bed-rock on which our blessings, as individuals, communities, and nations, rest.

4. A solid foundation for the claims of Christ had been laid.

(1) Complete series of types, natural and artificial, had been produced. Jewish ceremonialism is meaningless when separated from Christ. The worship was pictorial and prophetic. Types were the shadows of things to come, and they served not only to foretell the events, but to identify them when they appeared.

(2) A complete line of verbal prophecies had been delivered. The importance of this can not be overestimated. The minutest details concerning Christ had been prophetically declared, and by this means a line of evidence had been prepared of the strongest character. We can not eliminate this element. It was magnified by Christ and his apostles. Nearly every apostolic sermon was based on prophecy. If we may judge from apostolic preaching, we must conclude that modern preaching does not sufficiently magnify the line of evidence furnished in the Old Testament prophecies. New Testament preaching is a constant and continuous appeal to prophecy.

(3) The genealogical tables preserved in the nation trace the lineage of Christ back through David to Abraham, thus showing him to be the promised seed through whom the blessing intended for all nations was to come.

5. The inefficiency of both moral and ceremonial law as a remedial system, had been demonstrated. The prevailing notion with men has ever been to regulate human conduct by law. All civil government is based upon this idea. The method contemplates hedging in human conduct by laws to which penalties are attached that right conduct may thus be secured. Nothing more radical than this ever enters the mind of the average legislator. This is, doubtless, a necessary process during a certain stage of human development, but it is not a perfect system, and, consequently, can never be a final



system. It can never achieve the highest and best results. This truth was brought out in the previous chapter. It was necessary, however, to demonstrate this fact before a better system could be introduced. God must show the impossibility of salvation by law before man would accept salvation on any other terms. Accordingly, God put a chosen nation under a most marvelous code of laws, manifesting such wisdom and perfection that it has been made the model among the most civilized nations of modern times.

Coupled with this was a most wonderful ritualism. Forms and ceremonies of exceeding beauty and suggestiveness were divinely appointed for the chosen nation. By this means two important ends were secured. First, the nation was kept temporarily under a restraining influence, and thus its evil propensities were, in some degree, restrained. Second, the great and all-important truth was demonstrated that perfect manhood could not be secured, either by legal enactment or ceremonial observances. Notwithstanding the marvelous system of law given to it, the chosen nation sank deeper and deeper into degradation. Sin everywhere made its appearance. In the words of the inspired writer: "There was none righteous, no not one."

6. The Jewish nation had served a great missionary purpose.

(1) By its location it was admirably situated for the accomplishment of that great end. It was an isolated nation, and at the same time it was so situated as to be brought into frequent contact with the great nations by which it was surrounded. This statement seems paradoxical, and yet a moment's reflection will show it to be true. On the west was the ocean; on the north and northeast, a rough, mountainous country, impassable for large armies; on the southeast, a great desert served to cut the nation off from contact with the great nations of the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris. Intercourse with

Egypt on the south was difficult, owing to the desert nature of the country. In its every-day life the nation was, consequently, separated from other nations, and this isolation afforded the best possible protection against the contaminating influences of surrounding idolatrous and corrupt peoples while God was carrying forward his great line of preparation within the nation for the coming kingdom of grace and glory. Yet, strange as it may seem, there could not have been another spot chosen from which the peculiar truths of the nation could be so readily and universally disseminated. It was at the focal point where all the lines of communication between the great nations crossed. Fertile Egypt was the great bread-house of the world. It offered a constant temptation to invasion from the east, and Palestine must necessarily be crossed by the invading armies. Even the commerce of peace must make Palestine its thoroughfare. Furthermore, Palestine was the great highway of inter-communication, both in peace and war, between the mighty nations of the east and west. Persian hosts, Grecian phalanxes and Roman legions have in turn trampled its soil beneath their feet. The plain of Esdraelon in Western Palestine, both in ancient and more modern times, has literally been the battlefield of nations. That little spot of a few miles in circumference has seen more bloodshed than any other spot on earth. Palestine, therefore, was the highway for campaigns and counter-campaigns, and for the interchange of commerce between the east, west, and south. There could be but one result from all this.

The idea of one true and living God and of a coming Messiah as the Saviour of all men, which God had given to this unique nation, must, necessarily, become widely scattered. God picked out the one spot on the earth where these ideas could be sacredly guarded and, at the same time, widely disseminated among all nations. This fact stands as a strong argument in favor of the divine origin of Christianity. The

Jews were not a missionary people. On the contrary, they were clannish and exclusive, but God so located them that they could not monopolize the great truths that he had committed to their keeping.

(2) Even the great calamities that finally came upon the nation, were overruled by God for the furthering of his world-wide system of grace and truth. By successive deportations, the Jews were scattered among the nations of the East, until the whole nation was finally led away in the great Babylonish captivity. However, amidst their awful calamities and adversities, they held on to their peculiar God-given truths with wonderful tenacity, and doubtless, to some extent, impressed these ideas upon their captors. In this way, a great missionary work was done.

(3) After the captivity, the Jews manifested far less exclusiveness. They wandered throughout the civilized world, and settled in large numbers in all the great commercial centers, where they built synagogues for religious purposes, in which the Jewish Scriptures were read and expounded, and by this means their religious thought was widely scattered. However, they never lost their nationality. They still regarded Jerusalem as the religious center, to which they made frequent pilgrimages. In this way, national unity was preserved, and religious fervor kept alive.

In these ways, Judaism as a system, gradually permeated the nations, and the effect is easily discoverable. It was far superior to idolatry, and when brought in contact with it in a way that comparison could be made, it necessarily rose grandly above it. Intelligent men could not fail to note its preëminence, and thus faith in the ancient idolatrous systems was gradually weakened, until at the time of Christ's advent the religious systems of Greece and Rome were crumbling to decay. The life had already departed from these religions, and nothing but a decaying carcass was left. The knowledge of the Jewish

Scriptures, so widely diffused, had taken a strong hold upon the people, and was exercising such a marked influence that Seneca complained that the "conquered had given laws to their conquerors." History tells us that the disposition toward Judaism was very strong in some of the great capitals of the Roman empire.

**II. The Greek nation contributed an important part to the general preparation for the establishment of a world-embracing Messianic kingdom.**

1. The Greek language was of peculiar value in the founding of Christ's Church. In order that the gospel might be readily disseminated, a language must be developed suited to the general purpose of promulgation. It must be a language widely understood and capable of expressing thought in a popular, and, at the same time, a forcible and accurate way.

(1) The classic Hebrew language had served a grand purpose as a treasure-house for the reception of great, Divine truth, but it was utterly unsuited to the general purposes of promulgation. It was understood by a very limited number, and by its very nature it could never become a universal tongue. It was restricted to a few. It was too rigid and cumbersome, too stately and majestic, to ever become a popular tongue. True, it had wonderful poetic and oratorical elements, but it lacked the flexible mercurial quality necessary to make it the language of the masses. Even the Aramaic dialect, a corrupted form of the Hebrew, which gradually superseded the classic Hebrew after the Babylonian captivity, was wanting in the elements necessary to make it a popular tongue, and, besides, it belonged to a weak and subjugated people, who, even in the golden age of their national life, had exercised but little influence on the political life of the nations. Such a people might disseminate their ideas widely, but they could not, in the very

nature of the case, transmit their language to the powerful surrounding nations, even if it had possessed the popular elements.

(2) The old classic Greek, the most perfect language the world has ever seen, could never become the medium of general communication. Its very perfection unsuited it for popular use. It was the language of the cultivated, educated classes, but not the language of the common people. It was capable of expressing nicest shades of thought, and, like the Hebrew, it was well adapted to poetry, and especially to oratory of a certain finished and polished type. It was a language of philosophers and scholars, but its clothing was too fine for the rough-and-tumble use of every-day life.

(3) The classic Latin was a wonderful language, but it also lacked the popular elements. It was far too intricate and complicated ever to become a general medium of communication. As the classic Greek was the language of philosophy, so the Latin was the language of jurisprudence. Both were class languages, instead of universal tongues.

(4) In the providence of God, however, a language was being prepared that was calculated to displace all other tongues as the language of intercommunication. It was a Greek tongue, but it was not the classic Greek. In the armies of Alexander, the Greek peoples of the different Grecian states that had for centuries been kept separate and distinct, owing largely to the geographical characteristics of their country, and had, consequently, developed different dialects of the common parent speech, were brought into contact with each other as never before, and, consequently, there was a blending together of the various Grecian dialects into a common tongue (*Koinē dialektos*). This language had in it the elements of popularity. It was the language of the masses. It was spoken, not by a politically weak and conquered people, but by a nation that for a long period was dominant in the affairs

of the world. Grecian power and influence gave it a very wide constituency, but by its own intrinsic qualities, it continued to extend its dominion as a language long after Greece surrendered her political supremacy to the mighty power that had arisen on the banks of the Tiber, until at last it became the language of the civilized world. It retained many of the qualities of the ancient classic tongue, but it was far less finished and polished, and, for this reason, better adapted to common use. This common or Hellenistic tongue, as it is called, abounds in Hebrew and Aramaic idioms, and not a few words have crept into it from these and other sources. Josephus and Philo used this language in writing their histories, and it was adopted by the apostles of Christ and the early Christian writers generally. Owing to the prevalence of this language, the apostles could go everywhere with their message and be understood. Even the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into this tongue about 280 B. C. This translation, called the Septuagint, was widely scattered throughout the Roman Empire, and was read by both Jews and Gentiles. Consequently, a knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures had preceded the apostles as they went out on their world-wide mission, and it served as a marvelous preparation for their gospel message. It is very interesting and important to note that this wonderful tongue, which had conquered the world, first through the assistance of Grecian armies, and afterwards by means of a widespread system of Greek colonization, suddenly became a dead language a short time after it received into its keeping the richest treasure it had ever held, the New Testament Scriptures.

One can scarcely avoid the conclusion that God prepared this wonderful tongue as the receptacle for his final and complete revelation of truth, and through which it could be and was given to all the nations, and then sealed it up in the form in which it was first given as a treasure to be

kept and handed forward as an inheritance for all men and for all time.

I here introduce two forcible and pointed quotations, bearing directly on this point. The historian Kurtz says :

Thus, gradually, the Greek language which, when the gospel was first preached, was understood and spoken throughout the Roman Empire, obtained universal dominion, as it were, a temporary suspension of the judgment by which languages were confounded. So that the writings of the Apostles, whether addressed to Roman, Grecian, or Asiatic Christians, might all be in Greek, and even the Epistle to the Hebrews scattered abroad was probably written, not in their own language, but in this perfected and cosmopolitan tongue.

Dr. Schaff, in "Apostolic Church," pages 144, 145, says :

The language of Hellas is the most beautiful, rich and harmonious ever spoken or written, and Christianity has conferred the highest honor on it by making it the organ of her sacred truths. We may say it was predestined to form the pictures of silver in which the golden apple of the gospel should be preserved for all generations. To this end Providence so ordered, that by the conquests of Alexander the Great, and the planting of Greek colonies in the East, as also by reason of the copiousness and intrinsic value of the Greek literature, and its influence upon the Roman mind, this language had, before the birth of Christ, become the language of the whole civilized world. Through it the apostles could make themselves understood in any city of the Roman empire. In addition to this, the Creator had endowed the Greeks with the beautiful soul, a beautiful body; to provide for thought, the clearest, most suitable, and most natural expression; in short, to develop the idea of beauty.

2. The Grecian philosophers assisted very largely in the general preparation. With prophetic acumen that is strongly suggestive of a Divine inspiration, they pointed forward to the advent of a great teacher. Socrates confessed his own inability to utter the necessary truths, and declared that some one must come from heaven to instruct us.

The influence of Platonism is forcibly set forth by Dr. Schaff:

Of all systems of Greek philosophy, the one which undoubtedly exerted the most powerful and beneficial influence on the religious life of the heathen, and was preëminently fitted to be a scientific schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, was

Platonism. All the other systems were mostly negative, and tended to undermine the heathen superstition, and thereby to overthrow idolatry without substituting anything better in its place. But Platonism may be regarded as, in many respects, a direct guide to the gospel. It carries us back to Socrates (399 B. C.), the greatest and most remarkable moral personage of heathendom. In one view, this philosopher exhibits the perfection of a Grecian sage; in another, he towers far above his nation and age, as the prophet of a glorious future ("Apostolic Church," page 150).

Any one who reads Socrates on the immortality of the soul can not fail to see that such doctrine must have been a wonderful preparation for the teaching of Christ concerning the future life. In fact, the positive declarations of the Divine Teacher are the direct answers to the longings expressed by the Grecian philosophers. But, notwithstanding this direct work of preparation accomplished by Grecian philosophy, there was an indirect work no less important. As Israel has demonstrated that even Divine law, coupled with most elaborate ceremonials, was not, and could not be, a saviour, so Greece, by her experience, taught the lesson that man could not be saved by secular culture. No nation ever climbed to grander intellectual heights than did Greece. All that literature, in its highest forms, and art, in its most perfect manifestations, could do for a people, was done for the Greeks. The æsthetic nature of the Greek was cultivated to the highest point. Greece has furnished the models of both physical and intellectual beauty, and yet, with all their brilliant refinement, the nation sank continually lower in moral degradation. While we are dazzled with the intellectual aspect of Greek life, yet we have but to look at the moral side to be sickened with disgust. This negative lesson, taught so forcibly in the history of Greece, mankind has been very slow to learn, and even now there are not a few who put their hopes in culture as a saviour of man, but it is all an empty dream, and it is discredited by the sad experience of ancient Greece.



**III. The Roman nation was a mighty factor in the general preparation for Christ.**

1. Those who study the philosophy of history, readily discover that power was the great characteristic thought of the Roman people. Virgil embodies the thought in the following eloquent words :

Others will beat out the brass into the living image more delicately, I indeed believe. They will bring out the living faces from the marble, they will plead causes better, they will mark out the courses of the heavens with a rod, and they will describe the rising stars. Remember that it is yours, O Roman ! to rule the people with authority. These will be your arts to impose conditions of peace, to spare the conquered, and to subdue the haughty (Virgil's *Æneid*, Book VI., Verses 847-853).

This characteristic idea of power manifests itself in a genius for law or jurisprudence, doubtless because this is the best expression of power. Rome, by the power of her armies, tamed the conflicting and heterogeneous population of the world, and then, by her marvelous system of law, she ruled the subjugated nations, and, as Virgil says, "Imposed the conditions of the world's peace."

2. It is very easy to see what a mighty work of preparation Rome accomplished for Christianity. Universal empire brought about most favorable conditions for the introduction of a cosmopolitan religion.

(1) Universal peace was secured. Instead of scores of petty kingdoms and principalities, separated by jealousies and arrayed against each other by the vaulting ambition of wicked, selfish and unscrupulous leaders, Rome threw her giant arms around all and united them under a common head, thus making it possible for the heralds of the cross to go everywhere preaching the Word under the protection of Roman law. This universal peace began a short time before Christ appeared, and continued until the gospel had been securely planted. During this time the temple of Janus at Rome was closed for the second

time in Roman history. Milton celebrates this peace in the following beautiful measures:

No war nor battle sound  
Was heard the world around.  
The idle spear and shield were high up-hung.  
The hooked chariot stood  
Unstained with hostile blood,  
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,  
And kings sat still with awful eye,  
As if they surely knew their sovereign Lord was by.

This peace was absolutely essential to the success of the Apostles' work. The attention of men to religious things can not be secured in time of war. The bloodshed, the excitement, the danger, distract the minds of men; and the evil propensities of the human heart seem to run riot. Had the Apostles been sent out a century earlier, or a century later, their mission would probably have ended in failure; but during this time of peace, the kingdom of God took root so firmly that it could not be overthrown. Now let war and commotion come; let men give reign to their wicked, ambitious propensities; let murder and rapine run riot, but the kingdom of God will grow until at last another universal peace shall be secured—a peace that depends not on force of arms or the outward reign of law, but upon the dominion of inward principles of justice and love. Then, "men will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and the nations shall learn war no more."

(2) A system of highways was constructed that greatly facilitated travel, and brought the great centers of population, as well as the remote regions, into comparatively easy intercourse. These Roman roads offered ready facilities for transporting armies, and they became great arteries of trade, serving in this twofold way to unify the empire and make it far more homogeneous than it otherwise could have been. Gibbon, the historian, bears the following pointed testimony: "All the

cities of the Roman Empire were connected with each other, and with the capital, by public highways, which, issuing from the forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire."

The great advantage of this to Christianity is very apparent. Safe and speedy travel was made possible, which, to a missionary religion, propagated by purely peaceful means, is a highly essential condition of success. Gibbon also says:

The public highways which had been constructed for the use of the legions, opened an easy passage for the Christian missionaries from Damascus to Corinth, and from Italy to the extremity of Spain or Britain, nor did these spiritual conquerors encounter any of the obstacles which usually retard or prevent the introduction of a foreign religion into a distant country.

The advantages accruing to the messengers of the gospel from Roman supremacy, which have been pointed out by Gibbon, Professor Schaff, and others, may be partially summarized as follows: (1) Free access to all nations; (2) Easy and speedy communication; (3) Protection of Roman law; (4) General political peace and quiet. In short, it furnished the needed political and material preparation for the gospel of Christ.

In addition to the religious, intellectual, and political preparation furnished respectively by the Jewish, Grecian, and Roman nations, there was a general preparation seen among other nations.

I. A widespread expectancy of a great coming One existed.

(1) The Jews were looking for their Messiah for long centuries before Christ appeared, and at the time of his coming the expectation was not only widespread in the nation, but very intense. It was generally felt that the time was at hand. This, of course, is easily accounted for, since the Jewish Scriptures abound in most positive and specific Messianic prophecies.

(2) Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher, six hundred years before the coming of Christ, pointed his disciples to a great and holy One who would appear in the west (Prof. Schaff, in "Apostolic Church," pp. 183, 184). Some have thought that this idea was derived from the Jewish Scriptures, and that by some means it found its way eastward; and came into the possession of the Chinese sage. Whether this be the explanation or not, we can not certainly determine, but, to say the least, it seems improbable. Possibly God had inspired here and there a great man among the nations to foretell the coming One for whom they were unconsciously waiting, and whom they so much needed. Certainly such utterances would serve no unimportant office in the general preparation. I see no reason why we should conclude that all inspiration was confined to the chosen people. Some very thoughtful and pious men, impressed by the wonderful utterances of the Greek philosophers, have boldly claimed that the gift of prophecy was not always confined to the prophets and bards of Israel. Bishop Newton says: "Wonderful as the gift of prophecy was, it was not always confined to the chosen seed, nor yet always imparted to the best of men" ("Newton on the Prophecies," p. 59).

Even the heathen oracles are held by some to have been in some degree under the divine control. Prof. Tyler says, in speaking of these oracles:

Greece and the ancient world were the better for their existence. What forbids us to suppose that they were in some sense directed and overruled by Providence, and instead of being under the control of evil spirits, which was the prevailing theory among the Christian Fathers, were intended to be the forerunners among the heathen as the prophets were among the Jews of the Christian revelation" ("Theology of the Greek Poets," page 211).

I cite this, however, merely to show the position of an eminent thinker without in any way committing myself to his view.

The disciples of Zoroaster were taught to look for a Sosisch of supernatural origin ("Apostolic Church," pp. 183, 184). Tradition says that his advent was to be heralded by a star. May it not be that there is some connection between this Persian expectation, doubtless created by the great Persian philosopher, and the coming of the Magi to find the infant Redeemer, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and saying, "We saw his star in the east and are come to worship him"? Directly bearing on this point I introduce the following quotation from the Memoirs of Mrs. Judith S. Grant, a late missionary to Persia, which I copy from Peloubet's Sunday-school Notes, 1880:

Zoroaster taught the Persians concerning Christ. He declared that in the latter days a pure virgin should conceive and that, as soon as the child was born, a star would appear blazing even at noonday with undiminished lustre. "You, my sons," exclaimed the venerable seer, "will perceive its rising before any other nation. As soon as you see the star, follow it whithersoever it leads you, and adore the mysterious child, offering your gifts to him with profoundest humility. He is the Almighty Word which created the heavens."

To this may be added a quotation referred to by Prof. Schaff, in "Apostolic Church," p. 184:

Respecting the star of the Magi, and the remarkable astronomical calculations of A. Keppler and others, which have shown that, at the time of Christ's birth (four years before the Dionysian era) a conjunction of the planets Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars took place in the constellation Pisces, to which was added an extraordinary star ("Comp. Wieseler's Chronologische Synopse der vier Evang.," 1843, p. 57, *sqq.*)

In the same connection he adds:

The wise astrologers who came to Jerusalem to worship the new-born King of the Jews, we must look upon as the noblest representatives of the Messianic hopes of the Oriental heathens.

(3) The Latin historians, Suetonius and Tacitus, refer to a belief that was current to the effect that a new universal empire would soon arise in Judea ("Apostolic Church," pp. 183, 184).

(4) The fourth eclogue of Virgil was written in the year 714 A. U. C., or 39 B. C., when Pollio was consul and assisted in negotiating the peace of Brundisium. It is remarkable for the fact that it seems in some sense to embody a current hope or expectation that existed at the time of its composition. John Conington, in his commentary on the poem, says: "The hero of the poem is a child born, or to be born, in this auspicious year [B. C. 39], who is gradually to perfect the restoration then beginning." He then goes on to name several children, either or neither of which may have been the child referred to, adding:

Any of these births, so far as we can see, may have appeared at the time, to a courtly or enthusiastic poet, a sufficient center around which to group the hopes already assumed to be rising in men's minds. The peace of Brundisium itself was not so much the cause of this enthusiasm as the occasion for its manifestation, the partial satisfaction of a yearning which had long been felt, not merely the transient awakening of desires hitherto dormant. How far such hopes may have been connected with the expectation of a Messiah opens a wide question. The coincidence between Virgil's language and that of the Old Testament prophets is sufficiently striking.

The following is a somewhat free and poetic rendering of a few verses in the beginning of the poem:

The last age decreed by faith is come,  
And a new frame of all things does begin.  
A holy progeny from heaven descends,  
Auspicious be his birth; which puts an end  
To the iron age; and from whence shall rise  
A golden state far glorious through the earth.

(5) The great Grecian philosophers shared this anticipation of a coming One. Prof. Tyler says:

Socrates and Plato anticipated the advent of the Divine Teacher, advising to forego the usual sacrifices till such a Teacher should come ("Theology of the Greek Poets," p. 44).

The following quotation is taken from "Monser's Encyclopedia of Evidences":

One of the wisest of the heathen (Socrates) acknowledged that he could attain to no certainty respecting religious truth or moral duty, in these memorable words: "We must of necessity wait till some one from him who careth for us shall come and instruct us how we ought to behave toward God and toward man." He further says: "We can not know of ourselves what petition will be pleasing to God, or what worship we should pay to him; but it is necessary that a law-giver should be sent from heaven to instruct us." Still further on he says: "This law-giver must be more than man, that he may teach us the things man can not know by his own nature" (Plato: "Republic," Books IV. and VI.; also, "Alcibiades," II.).

(6) How harmonious is all this with the need felt by Job and the implied longing for a Mediator expressed in these words: "For he [God] is not a man as I am, that I should answer him and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon us both." He, like Socrates in later ages, felt the need of some one to bridge over the chasm between God and man. Job longed for a daysman that earth could not furnish; Socrates, for some one to come from heaven to instruct him.

(7) Even the Messianic kingdom seems to have been unconsciously foretold, as a quotation from Fisher, in his "Beginnings of Christianity," shows:

Plato's "Republic" offers the finest illustration of the loftiness of his aspirations, and, at the same time, of the barriers which it was impossible for him to overpass. This work gives evidence of the yearning of his mind for a more intimate union and fellowship of man than had hitherto existed. How could this aspiration be realized? The only form of society in which he could conceive it possible for such a community to come into being was the state. And in order to give effect to his conception, individuality must be lost in the all-controlling influence and sway of the social whole. Plato says that in the best ordered state there will be a common feeling, such as pervades the parts of the human body; he uses the very figure of St. Paul when he says of Christians that they are members one of another. But this relation could never be produced by any form of political society. Besides this insurmountable difficulty, Plato does not escape from the pride of race. It is an Hellenic state which he will found, and the Hellenes are

not to treat the barbarians as they treat one another, the Hellenic race being "alien and strange to the barbarians." The vision of the Republic, must, therefore, stand as an unconscious prophecy of the kingdom of Christ. The ancient heathen world could not supply the conditions demanded for its fulfillment" (p. 155).

The wisest of the heathen longed for a common brotherhood of man, which they were unable to realize. Jesus taught the doctrine of brotherhood of man, and based it on the only possible foundation, the Fatherhood of God. In this he answered the ardent desire expressed by Plato and others.

(8) Heathen oracles lent their influence to propagate and foster this widespread expectancy, and thus assist in the general preparation.

Suetonius, in his "Life of Augustus," chapter xciv., quotes Julius Marathus as authority for the statement "that a few months before he [Augustus] was born, a public prodigy took place at Rome, by which it was announced that nature would give birth to a king for the Roman people. That the Senate was terrified, and passed a resolution that no one born that year should be educated. That those who had pregnant wives (because each one entertained the hope for himself) took care that the decree of the Senate should not be given in at the *Ærarium*" (*i. e.*, entered upon the public records). That such a prophecy should have been made is a very interesting circumstance. Some have attempted to find its fulfillment in Augustus. According to certain historians, Cornelius Lentulus tried to apply it to himself, but this was ridiculed by Cicero, on the ground that it could not be applied to one born in Rome. It may be that no prophetic value attaches to these Sibylline utterances, but to say the least, the coincidence is remarkable, coming as they did a short time previous to the birth of Christ, the world's King.

It is a remarkable fact that after the birth of Christ these heathen oracles suddenly were hushed. In the new "American Encyclopedia," in the article on "Oracle," this language occurs:



Eusebius and others affirmed that they became silent at the birth of Christ, and assigned as a reason that Christ put an end to the power of Satan on earth, and to the worship offered him under the name of God by the Gentiles.

From this quotation it will be seen that, although some have thought it not improbable that certain of the Sibylline prophecies may have been inspired by God, others have looked upon them as inspired by Satan. At any rate, whether inspired or not, they suddenly ceased about the time of Christ's advent. In the article on "Sibyl," new "American Encyclopedia," we read, in reference to the Sibylline books :

In the reign of Augustus, more than two thousand spurious prophetic books of this description, which had accumulated in private hands, were, at the command of the emperor, delivered to the prætor Urbanus and burned. On three subsequent occasions the Sibylline books were burned and again restored.

These heathen prophecies, which once exercised a wonderful influence, had lost their power. If they contained any true prophecy, it was certainly a very small amount as compared with the great amount uttered. Strenuous attempts were made to revive the faith in them, but all to no purpose. In another part of the article on "Oracle," already referred to, we read :

The Neo-Platonists referred the origin of oracles to the demons, and Plutarch explained the cessation of some of the oracles by the death of the demons. The theurgists sought to revive them and oppose them to Christianity. Julian vainly attempted to restore the faith in them.

Porphyrus bears the following testimony :

And now people wonder that this distemper has oppressed the city so many years, Esculapius and the other gods no longer conversing with men. For, since Jesus has been honored, none have received any public benefit from the gods.

Mrs. Browning's poem, entitled "The Dead Pan," was partly founded, as she says, "on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch ('De Oraculorum Defectu'),

according to which, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a cry of 'Great Pan is dead!' swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners, and the oracles ceased." A few stanzas from the poem may serve to bring the tradition before us in a more realistic way :

Calm of old the bark went onward  
 When a cry, more loud than wind,  
 Rose up, deepened and swept sunward,  
 From the piled dark behind ;  
 And the sun shrank and grew pale,  
 Breathed against by the great wail,  
 " Pan, Pan is dead."

And the rowers from the benches  
 Fell each shuddering on his face,  
 While departing influences  
 Struck a cold back through the place ;  
 And the shadow of the ship  
 Reeled along the passive deep—  
 " Pan, Pan is dead."

And that dismal cry rose slowly  
 And sank slowly through the air,  
 Full of spirits melancholy  
 And eternity's despair,  
 And they heard the word it said—  
 " Pan is dead—Great Pan is dead"—  
 " Pan, Pan is dead."

'T was the hour when One on Zion  
 Hung for love's sake on a cross,  
 When his brow was chill with dying,  
 And his soul was faint with loss ;  
 When his priestly blood dropped downward,  
 And his kingly eyes looked throneward—  
 Then Pan was dead.

When Jesus Christ expired on the cross, he exclaimed : " It is finished !" Wonderfully suggestive words ! Long lines of prophecy in type and verbal utterance were now fulfilled.

Great nations and races had accomplished their work of preparation. Great expectations were now met. Great hopes of peasant, seer, philosopher, and poet were now fulfilled, and if God ever condescended to use things so weak as Sibylline oracles, these, too, were answered. The work of preparation was finished, and the kingdom of God, with its world-wide beneficent purpose of grace, was established on the firm foundation, the rock of eternal ages, Jesus Christ.

2. And the world was bankrupt in hope. All its efforts to find the "*Summum Bonum*" had proven futile.

(1) The flood that swept out of existence an awfully corrupt and guilty world tells the story of the utter failure that characterized all antediluvian attempts to solve the great problem of true human happiness and blessedness.

(2) After the flood, great civilizations were developed in the fertile valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris, in Egypt, and later in the west under the dominion of Greece and Rome. The Oriental Asiatic nations demonstrated the fact that national stability and lasting prosperity could not be built upon great power selfishly appropriating to itself the possessions of the weak. Material splendor, as the fruit of robbery, could not save a nation. Egypt added the lesson that great wealth and magnificence, as the result of boundless natural resources, was also unavailing.

Reference has already been made to the three great lessons of failure taught by Israel, Greece, and Rome. Wealth, material splendor, power, culture, wisdom, ceremonialism, law, divine and human, had all been tried, and all had ended in failure, nor must it be supposed that this resulted from any lack of natural ability on the part of the leaders in the various fields of thought and action. Men of mighty genius appeared in all the ancient nations. Military leaders, statesmen, artists, poets, law-givers, orators, philosophers appeared from time to time, certainly equalling anything witnessed in

modern times. It seems that God endowed men with most brilliant gifts in all departments of human thought and action, so that the world would be left utterly without excuse for its awful failure.

Generation after generation came and passed away, and each strove to improve by the struggles and failures of those that went before, but all efforts utterly failed. The world was fast settling into hopeless despair when Christ came. Neander, in the Introduction to his Church History, quotes the following language from the elder Pliny :

All religion is the offspring of necessity, weakness and fear. What God is, if indeed he be anything distinct from the world, it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know, but it is a foolish delusion which has sprung from human weakness and human pride, to imagine that such an infinite spirit would concern himself with the petty affairs of men. It is difficult to say whether it might not be better to be wholly without religion than to have one of this kind, which is a reproach to its object. The vanity of man and his unsatiable longing after existence, have led him to dream of a life after death. A being full of contradictions, he is the most wretched of creatures, since the other creatures have not wants transcending the bounds of their nature. Man is full of desires and wants that reach to infinity and can never be satisfied. His nature is a lie, uniting the greatest poverty with the greatest pride. Among these so great evils, the best thing which God has bestowed on man is the power to take his own life.

A darker picture than this could not well be drawn by human pen, and it shows the despair into which the world had fallen. This, however, was a necessary factor in the world's preparation. As long as man has hope in himself, he is unwilling to accept salvation at the hands of another. When he realizes that every chance is gone, he will take hold of the hand that God reaches down to him. This was the condition of the world when Christ came. Oriental splendor, Hebrew religion, Greek culture, Roman law, had each contributed its part in the general preparation and taught its own peculiar lesson of failure. The great currents of history had all converged to a single point. The great men of all nations felt

their own need and their own inability, and were pointing to one object, and that object was the great expected One, the "Sociosch," the one to be born from above, the desire of the nations.

As God's man always comes in the fullness of time, so Jesus came and took his station at the appointed time and place. The angels' song is heard, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men." The desire of the ages is at last met. Long lines of history and prophecy are now explained and fulfilled. Standing thus in the focal point of all history, he grasps the converging lines of the past and the diverging lines of the future, and unites them in himself. Through him the centuries that preceded and the centuries that followed clasped hands, and the world is united in a common brotherhood.

The great apostle to the Gentiles sums up the blessings enjoyed in Christ in the following impressive manner :

But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. iv. 4, 5).

Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. . . . Having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him (Eph. i. 3, 4, 9, 10).

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. . . . For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. i. 18-20; ii. 9).

Job's "Daysman," the "Holy One" of Confucius, the "Sosiosch" of Zoroaster, and "Heaven-born Messenger" of

Socrates, the "Son of God" stands upon the earth and speaks the words for which the ages have waited. As men listen and catch the divine harmony of his teachings, and slake their burning thirst with the water of life, they exclaim, "It is He."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FOUNDATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

**Introduction :** Explanation of the phrase, "Kingdom of God."

1. The word "kingdom" is used to designate that state or condition into which the righteous enter after they pass from this world. Jesus, in describing the general judgment, represents the good and bad as standing, the one on the right and the other on the left, and the Judge as saying to those on the right, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34). In II. Peter i. 11 we read: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This promise is given to Christians, who should make their calling and election sure by the development of the Christian graces. Paul says (I. Cor. xv. 50), "Flesh and blood can not inherit the kingdom of God."

2. The phrase, "Kingdom of God," is used to designate certain inward principles or a certain state or condition of holiness. When the Pharisees demanded of Jesus when the kingdom of God should come, he said: "The kingdom of God cometh, not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Paul doubtless uses the phrase in this sense when he says: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. xiv. 17).

3. The phrase is used to designate the outward visible organization called the church, composed of prepared persons who have entered it by certain definite and clearly defined steps. Such persons are in the kingdom in this outward sense, and have the kingdom within them in the inward sense referred to above. The references to the kingdom in this sense are very abundant. Jesus said: "There are some of you standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 28). "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke xii. 32). "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness" (Matt. vi. 33). John the Baptist said: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2). It is scarcely necessary to remark that in these quotations, as well as in many other passages that might be quoted, the word "kingdom," and the phrases, "kingdom of God," "kingdom of heaven," and "kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," are used synonymously and interchangeably, and designate the outward visible kingdom in the world. It will presently appear that the word "church" is also used to designate the same outward institution.

We use the phrase "kingdom of God" in the third sense referred to above in discussing its foundation.

We will consider,—

#### I. The essential antecedent truth.

This was prominently brought out in the conversation of Christ with his disciples near Cæsarea Philippi.

1. Notice the pointed question of Christ: "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?"

(1) This is a momentous question, and a more important one man is never called upon to settle. Upon its answer the most stupendous consequences pertaining to this world and the



world to come are suspended. To answer it correctly, means to place the individual in the line of greatest possibilities and highest blessedness for time and eternity. To answer incorrectly, means to fail in reaching the true ends of being ; it means to involve the soul in irretrievable ruin. In this statement no reference is made to those persons to whom the question has never come. This involves other questions and considerations for which we have no room in this connection, and which are not germane to this discussion.

(2) This is a personal question. Every man must meet and settle it for himself. Parent can not answer it for child, nor child for parent, nor friend for friend. Every one must confront this question, decide upon it, and act accordingly. In fact, every man will inevitably act upon his decision, if he be true to himself. When once this question, with all it involves, has been fully comprehended and answered by serious, earnest souls, the course of life is necessarily determined.

2. Notice the answer made by the disciples to Christ's question : "Some say that thou art John the Baptist ; some, Elias ; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." This answer shows several things.

(1) That then, as now, there were differences of opinion.

(2) That then, as now, men recognized the greatness of Christ, even though they had different opinions concerning his personality. They saw in him the fidelity of John the Baptist, the heroic sternness of Elijah, the tenderness and sympathy of Jeremiah, and the high intellectual and moral qualities of the prophets in general.

(3) That men ascribed to him more than the ordinary powers of man. They believed in the inspiration of their prophets and accorded to Christ the honor of being one of them.

3. Notice Christ's still more pointed question and Peter's reply : "But who say ye that I am ? And Simon Peter

answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This answer mounts up to the very climax of possible confession. There could be no greater answer given. At one bound it leaps to the very highest possible ground respecting Christ's personality. It places him at once upon the God level, and, if not true, subjects the man who uttered it to the charge of blasphemy, and consequently imperils his life under the Jewish law. Such an answer can not be accounted for except on the ground that it sprang from the deepest conviction of its truth. No man will imperil his life by a statement concerning the truth of which he has the slightest doubt.

4. Notice Jesus' reception of this answer: "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who art in heaven." In these words we see,—

(1) That Christ accepts the answer as the true one, which, even as a good man simply, he could not do if it were false.

(2) That he pronounces a blessing upon the man who uttered it, thus testifying to the greatness of the answer.

(3) That Christ recognizes the supernatural source of the answer by declaring it to be a revelation from God, and, consequently, above the natural powers of man to discover. This was true *then*, and must forever remain true. Men must ever base their faith in Christ's divinity upon the declarations of God and the indubitable supernatural evidences furnished.

5. Notice the declaration of Jesus founded on this answer: "And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

In this language the following important points should be noted:

(1) That Christ declares that he will build an institution which he calls his church.

(2) That this institution will rest on a foundation, called here "this Rock."

(3) That the word "church" is used synonymously with the phrase "kingdom of heaven." (This same use of the word is seen in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews: "But ye are come unto Mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born." A few verses further along the inspired writer says: "Wherefore we, receiving a kingdom that can not be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.")

(4) That the keys of the kingdom or church were given to Peter. Or, in other words, to him was given the honor of first opening the door—i. e., of declaring the terms of admission into the kingdom.

## II. The great central truth.

1. The importance attaching to the question of foundation is very great.

(a) All institutions, of whatever character, rest on some foundation. There is some basal proposition or underlying principle upon which every institution is built.

(1) Each different form of government rests on its own foundation. An absolute monarchy rests on the proposition that the ruler is supreme, and his will the supreme law. A republic, such as is seen in the United States of America, rests on the proposition that "all men are created equal."

(2) Every social institution has its own peculiar basal principle.

(3) Every organization for moral reform has its underlying principle that is peculiar to it.

(b) The fundamental proposition or truth determines the nature of the institution. You can not build a republic on the principle underlying an absolute monarchy, nor can you build a monarchy on the principle underlying a republic. You can not build a temperance society on the proposition that the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage is beneficial or harmless.

Having settled upon the basal proposition, the nature of the institution is thereby fixed and determined.

2. The nature of the foundation of Christ's kingdom is, therefore, a matter of supreme importance. Let us consider this question.

(a) As determined by the meaning of the word "rock" in Christ's declaration, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," but three suppositions seem possible, and, so far as I know, but three views have been promulgated.

(1) It is held by some that Peter is the rock. He is regarded as the chief or primate among the apostles, and this primacy, it is claimed, has descended to the bishops of Rome in regular succession until the present time, Pope Leo XIII. being the present incumbent of St. Peter's chair. In proof of this view, the fact is cited that the word "Peter"—Greek, "*Petros*"—means stone.

To this it may be replied, first, that Christ used the word "*petra*"—derived, it is true, from the same root, but of a different gender—when he said: "On this rock I will build my church"; and, second, that there is no proof that Peter had any such primacy as is claimed for him by the advocates of this view, certainly not such as is claimed and exercised by the Pope of Rome. There is a somewhat modified view of the foregoing to the effect that the church is founded upon the apostles, Peter being named because he was prominent among them. In support of this, it is urged that he was the one by

whose hand the first stones in the building were laid, both among the Jews and Gentiles, the others afterward joining with him in the work. To this, it may be replied that it is certainly very unusual to call the man or the men who lay the first stones of a building the foundation. If the apostles can be called the foundation at all, it certainly is only in a secondary sense. They were primary stones in the building, but they of themselves were utterly insufficient for a foundation. As weak, erring, fallible men, they must needs have a foundation for their own support.

(2) Others by this word "*rock*" understood the confession that Peter has just made, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This, it is claimed, will account for the change in the gender of the words used, "Thou art *Petros* [a masculine substantive], and upon this *Petra* [a feminine substantive], I will build my church." This is doubtless very much nearer the truth than the foregoing theory. A blessing was pronounced on Peter when he made the confession, and the statement was made that it had come to him as a revelation from God. That this proposition embodies a great truth, and one that is vitally essential, is beyond all question. If Christ be not the only begotten Son of God, then Christianity is a delusion. But while this is undoubtedly true, yet the accuracy of the statement that the Church of Christ is founded on this confession, may well be called in question. Is the church founded on any abstract statement or statements of truth? Such does not seem to be the general tenor of New Testament teaching. To believe something about Jesus does not constitute Christian faith. Neither can one or a hundred propositions expressing truth about Jesus constitute the foundation of the church.

(3) Still others understand the word "*rock*" to refer to Christ himself. In this view of the case, the church is founded, not on the truth that Christ is the Son of God, but

on Christ himself as the Son of God. Faith in Christ, therefore, is not belief of the proposition that Christ is the Son of God, but trust in Christ, the Son of God.<sup>4</sup> That the latter involves the former is certainly true, but the former is by no means equivalent to the latter. This passage, beyond question, is perfectly harmonious with this view of the case. "*Petros*" means a piece of rock, a fragment of stone, "*Petra*" means rock in the sense of a large body of rock, or a ledge of rock. In classic Greek, this distinction is always maintained, and the best authorities say there is no example of "*petros*" used in the sense of "*petra*" in classic Greek literature. Then why is it necessary to assume that it is so used in this passage? If we depart from classic usage, there ought to be some good reason for doing so. True, both "*petros*" and "*petra*" might be used to metaphorically represent the idea of firmness or stability, but when both are brought together in the same sentence, as in this instance, both can not refer to the same thing.

With these facts before us, it is not hard to see Christ's meaning. "Thou art Peter" (*Petros*). "You are a firm, unyielding man; others may be vacillating and changing—you are stable." "And on this rock" (*petra*)—referring to his own personality, to himself as one who possessed the qualities of the *petros* to a much greater extent, who is as much greater than Peter as *petra* is greater than *petros*—"I will build my church." Which is better as a foundation—*petros*, a piece of rock, or *petra*, the bed rock, of which *petros* is a mere fragment? That which makes Christ a sufficient foundation, a *petra*, is the truth expressed in the proposition, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," but the proposition is not the foundation. It merely expresses a great truth by virtue of which Christ declares himself to be the foundation. In this view of the case, the clause, "And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," refers primarily to Christ's personal

victory over death. He went down into Hades, but the gates could not shut him in; they could not prevail against the Rock, Christ Jesus. He came forth a triumphant conqueror, bringing life and immortality to light. In a secondary sense, it may refer to the church. If death can not hold Christ a prisoner, surely no opposing power will be able to overcome the church which is built on him.

(b) As determined by prophecy.

Isaiah, more than seven hundred years before Christ came, used this language: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a true stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation, and he that believeth shall not make haste." This passage is applied to Christ in the New Testament (I. Peter ii. 5-8): "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, because it is contained in the Scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect and precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame. For you, therefore, which believe he is precious, but for such as disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." This, being an inspired interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy, is conclusive. Christ, according to prophecy, was the foundation stone.

(c) As determined by the view of Christ's apostles.

(1) In Ephesians ii. 19, 20, we read: "So then, ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner-stone." It must not be thought that this passage makes the apostles and prophets the foundation, since, according to the best critics, these words are in the genitive of the author. Jesus Christ is the foundation or chief

corner-stone to which prophets pointed, and which the apostles laid as the foundation of the church, and hence he was the foundation of the apostles and prophets.

(2) In I. Corinthians iii. 10, 11, we have an explicit declaration which can not be misunderstood: "According to the grace of God, which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This is conclusive, and it is in beautiful accord with Christ's words to Peter: "On this rock I will build my church."

### III. The important consequent truths.

I. This foundation determines the character of the government.

(a) A government founded on a person is necessarily monarchical. If the ruler be subjected to constitutional restrictions in the exercise of his power, the government is a limited monarchy; otherwise, it is absolute. Restrictions are put upon rulers because of their disposition to abuse power. It is very hard for the sovereign to exercise his power for the good of the governed, regardless of all purely selfish considerations; consequently, the history of monarchical forms of government has been the history of the struggles of the masses to wrest from the hands of unwilling despots the rights of which they have been deprived. If rulers were infallible, the rights of the people would not be invaded, and monarchical government would be the ideal government.

(b) The kingdom, being built on Christ, is determined as to its character and quality by what Christ is, and this is couched in the proposition, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Accepting this truth,—

(1) We conclude that on a *priori* grounds the kingdom is an absolute monarchy. There are no constitutional limitations



upon Christ, the King. No man, or set of men, may say to him: "Thus far, and no farther." None may make laws or regulations for his kingdom, or set aside those he has made. His will is the supreme law. When he has spoken, all controversy ends. From his decisions there is no appeal, and no one has authority to abrogate his laws.

(2) We see that this form of government is in accordance with New Testament teaching. As the Son of God, Jesus says: "All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth." How beautifully this declaration harmonizes with the words of the Father: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." As God manifest in the flesh, all authority belonged to him, and he spake and acted with the authority of God.

(3) We feel that this is the ideal form of government under the circumstances. With a ruler infinite in all his attributes and perfect in every respect, an absolute monarchy is of all governments the most to be desired. He can and will protect his subjects. He will not invade their rights; he will do them no injustice or wrong. His laws will never need to be abrogated or changed, because they will always be perfect. From his decisions there need be no appeal, because they will be always just and right. A republic is the ideal form of government among men when the people are enlightened and virtuous, because the whole people are more likely, under such circumstances, to be right, and less likely to do wrong than one man; but no people will ever become so enlightened or virtuous that they will be superior to the infinite, infallible God, and in our ruler "dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily."

2. This foundation determines the basis of citizenship.

(a) The basis of membership in any organization lies in the acceptance of the foundation and the declaration of the loyalty to that. One may become a citizen of a monarchical

form of government by accepting the ruler and swearing loyalty to him. One may become a citizen of a republic by accepting the fundamental principle upon which it is based and taking the oath of allegiance. One may become a member of any social and moral institution by accepting its fundamental doctrine and submitting to the prescribed forms of introduction. These propositions are so self-evident as to need no argument.

(b) Since the foundation of the church is a person, and not abstract truths or doctrines, it follows that the basis of membership is not doctrinal. It is not a question of believing certain dogmas, few or many, but of accepting the divine person, Jesus Christ, who is the foundation. This is done by formally and openly professing faith in him, and submitting to the initiatory rite of baptism which he has ordained and imposed. Because this is the culminating act, we are said to be baptized into Christ. The steps logically involved in this process, and also clearly indicated in New Testament teaching, are :

(1) Faith or trust in Christ, by which the heart is changed.  
 (2) Repentance, or change of mind, resulting from sorrow for sin and leading to reformation of life.

(3) Public confession with the lips, of the faith in the heart, by which the foundation is openly accepted.

(4) Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as the divinely imposed form of initiation, and by which the state or relation of the individual is changed.

In this it will be seen that the open acceptance of the foundation is preceded by faith and repentance, the reason for which lies in the necessities of the case, and is followed by baptism, the reason for which lies wholly in the authority of the King. This is perfectly in harmony with reason. The King has an undoubted right to prescribe the initiatory ceremony by which persons properly prepared may be inducted into the kingdom, and those who accept the King, and thus

place themselves under his authority, are under obligation to submit to the ordinance imposed.

3. The foundation determines the stability of the kingdom.

(1) The strength and stability of an institution is determined very largely by the strength of the foundation. A government resting upon a man necessarily has certain elements of weakness. Human rulers are all fallible, and have all the weaknesses that belong to men which lead to injustice and wrong. Herein are the seeds of ruin. All, too, are subject to death, and this is always a disturbing factor in government, and sometimes leads to overthrow.

(2) The kingdom of Jesus Christ, being built on an infallible ruler, and one who has conquered death, has no such elements of weakness. It is built, not upon a great and good man, but upon a divine person; not upon a dead and buried Christ, but upon a risen Lord and Saviour. Its ruler is as much alive to-day as when he trod the hills and valleys of Palestine, healing the maladies of men, and speaking words of comfort and cheer to sad and burdened hearts. We need not fear that the weaknesses of this King will endanger the stability of the kingdom, or that the death of the King will result in its overthrow.

John, on the Isle of Patmos, saw and heard the King, and describes his beatific vision in these wonderful words: "And having turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks [representing the churches], and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle, and his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters; and he had on his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his

strength ; and when I saw him I fell at his feet as one dead, and he laid his right hand on me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last and the living one ; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

Before this King we may well bow in adoration and reverence. On this foundation we can stand secure amidst all the storms and commotions of time. "Of his kingdom there shall be no end."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

**Introduction:** In order to ascertain when the kingdom of God was established in the world, it is very necessary that we should have a clear idea of what is meant by the phrase, "Kingdom of God." In other words, the expression must be used in a definite sense that we clearly understand; otherwise our search may prove barren of any good results, or, what is worse, we may reach entirely erroneous conclusions.

We have seen, in a previous chapter, that the word "kingdom" is used in at least three senses: (1) It is employed to designate the state into which the righteous enter after the resurrection of the dead, when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, the Father, that he may be all in all. (2) It is used to designate the rule of a certain inward governing principle, regulating and determining the life of the individual, or, perhaps, it would be equally as accurate to say, that it is used to designate a certain inward state or condition. In this sense, the kingdom is within the soul. (3) It is also used to designate the outward visible organization, called the "Church of God," or "Church of Christ," which is composed of those in whom certain inward principles have become dominant, and who have taken the definite initiatory steps prescribed by Christ and his apostles as the conditions of admission.

To the foregoing may be added still another kingdom, called the "kingdom of Nature," which, in one sense, is a kingdom of God, since God is the author of nature. Disregarding the inward kingdom of principles, for the reason that

it is embraced in the outward or visible church, we have the three great kingdoms of nature, grace, and glory, into each of which man is introduced by a birth—into the kingdom of nature, by the natural birth; into the kingdom of grace (the church), by a spiritual birth; into the kingdom of glory (the everlasting kingdom), by a birth from the grave, or the resurrection from the dead.

In this discussion, however, we use the phrase, “Kingdom of God,” to designate the kingdom of grace, or the Church of Christ; and to ascertain, if possible, the exact time when this institution was inaugurated, is the purpose of this chapter.

In our investigations we will consider,—

I. Some of the possible views that may be entertained with respect to this question, and especially such as are liable to result from an ambiguous or indefinite use of the phrase, “Kingdom of God.”

It is possible to hold,—

1. That the kingdom has had an existence from all eternity.

If this position be taken, one of two things is meant: either (1) that God’s kingdom includes all things animate and inanimate, celestial and terrestrial, and that, consequently, man as a part of the great system of nature, is in that kingdom; or (2) that the purpose of God respecting this kingdom is equivalent to the kingdom itself. In this view of the case, the kingdom had no beginning unless it can be said that this purpose of God had a beginning.

The former of these views would make the kingdom of God identical with the great kingdom of nature; the latter would confound it with the eternal purpose of God; or, in other words, it makes no discrimination between the purpose to do and the purpose accomplished.

2. That while the kingdom existed in the purpose of God from all eternity, yet it had no actual existence until the creation of man.

In this view of the case, Adam was the first citizen of the kingdom, and all of God's dealings with the race from the beginning present different aspects of the same kingdom, or different phases of the divine government or administration.

3. That the kingdom began immediately after the deluge, or possibly, immediately before. At any rate, Noah and his family, consisting in all of eight souls, would constitute the first citizens, according to this view.

4. That the kingdom was established in the days of Abraham, the fleshly posterity of Abraham constituting the original citizens of the kingdom. Those who adhere to this view maintain that the basis of citizenship was afterwards enlarged so as to include a spiritual seed. However, there is no sharp line of distinction drawn between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, but the two are run together, thus constituting a continuous church or kingdom. According to this view, a certain part of the law known as the ceremonial portion, was abrogated, while the remainder, known as the moral law, was continued, and upon this were engrafted certain new principles, under which the Gentiles were admitted to citizenship. It will be seen that in this view of the case, the Church of Christ is not a new and independent institution resting on its own foundation, but simply a continuation of the old Jewish institution, under somewhat changed or modified aspects.

This, for some unaccountable reason, has been a very popular view, and those who have taught that the whole Mosaic code, both moral and ceremonial, was abrogated, have been regarded by many as holding dangerous heresy.

5. That the kingdom has its beginning in the days of John the Baptist. Those who repented under the ministry of John, and were obedient to his baptism, must necessarily have constituted the first citizens of the kingdom, according to this view.

6. That the kingdom was established during Christ's personal ministry here on earth. According to this view, the twelve apostles, or possibly the seventy disciples, constituted the charter members of the kingdom.

7. The kingdom was established on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection by the apostles of Christ, when, under the preaching of Peter, three thousand were convicted of sin and bowed to the authority of Christ in the act of baptism. According to this view, the three thousand new converts, together with the apostles and personal disciples of Christ, constituted the first citizens of the kingdom. Those who hold this view, maintain that then, for the first time, all the elements of the kingdom were present and the necessary conditions of a kingdom fulfilled.

8. Last of all, there are some who hold that the kingdom has no actual existence at the present time, but they look forward to its establishment when the millennium shall be ushered in. Then, it is claimed, Christ will assume kingly powers and prerogatives.

If we succeed in accomplishing the purpose of this chapter, we must decide which, if any, of these possible views is correct.

It will be seen that the range of possibility lies between two wide extremes. We appear to be under the necessity of searching from the eternal past into the indefinite future in order to accomplish our object, if we would give the views mentioned serious consideration; but, happily, we are under no such necessity. Our task is very much simpler, as will appear, when we consider,—



**II. The utterances of New Testament teachers restricting the possible period within very narrow limits.**

1. John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Two conclusions may be drawn from this language that seem reasonable and natural: (1) That the kingdom of heaven was not yet an actually existing fact. (2) That it was by or at hand, or, in other words, that it would be established in the near future.

2. The teaching of Christ is perfectly harmonious with this idea. (1) In Mark i. 14, 15: "Now, after that John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." The word gospel here must, however, refer to the good news concerning the coming kingdom. This, like the language of John, points to the near approach of the kingdom. (2) When Christ sent out the twelve under his first commission, he said to them, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. x. 5-7). This passage teaches the same doctrine that is taught in the foregoing passage.

The restricted nature of this commission shows that the kingdom had not yet come. This was merely preparatory work that Christ sent the twelve to do. (3) When Peter made his wonderful confession near Cæsarea Philippi, Christ said to him: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). Since Peter was to do this binding and loosening on earth, it follows that this kingdom must have come into existence during his lifetime. This, too,

suggests the near approach of the kingdom. (4) Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." This indicates that the kingdom had not yet come. True, we pray the same prayer now; but in doing so, we pray for the wider extent of the kingdom that is already established; but Christ evidently used the expression in no such sense, as becomes apparent when we place the language by the side of the other passages just quoted. (5) He also said, "Fear not, little flock—it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Thus we see that they were taught to pray for the kingdom to come, and they were assured that it was the good pleasure of the Father to answer the prayer.

3. The utterances of Christ's apostles, after his ascension, are perfectly consistent with this teaching of Christ while still on earth. (1) Paul said to the Thessalonians, "Ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory" (1. Thess. ii. 11, 12). (2) The writer to the Hebrews said: "But ye are come unto Mt. Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, . . . wherefore we, receiving a kingdom which can not be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. xii. 22, 28). (3) To the Colossians, Paul said: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. i. 12, 13). (4) In writing to the seven churches in Asia, John said: "I, John, who am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle called Patmos, for the word of God" (Rev. i. 19).

Other passages of similar import might be introduced from New Testament writers.

These quotations from John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles, are abundantly sufficient to establish two important points: (1) That the kingdom was in existence when the apostles wrote the language just referred to; (2) that the kingdom was not in existence when John the Baptist and Christ spoke the words quoted above, but was near at hand. It must, therefore, have come during this intervening period. This conclusion is necessary and irresistible. Accordingly the problem with which we have to deal is very much simplified, since our search for the beginning of the kingdom must needs be restricted to a brief interval of time, which certainly did not exceed twenty-five years in the most.

Our farther search will be materially assisted by calling to mind,—

### **III. The necessary elements and essential logical obligations of the kingdom.**

1. In every kingdom, at least four things must be present. In order for a kingdom to exist as an actual fact, there must be (1) a king, (2) citizens, (3) territory of some kind, (4) a law of citizenship. We may, therefore, expect to find these elements present when we find the kingdom of God as an actual existing institution.

2. The gospel must have been preached either before or at the time of the establishment of the kingdom. It must ever be kept in mind that the kingdom of God is spiritual. Its rule is exerted over the hearts of men. It affects or regulates outward conduct and action by means of an inward power. Its citizens are composed of spiritually prepared persons, and the great factor in accomplishing this needed preparation is termed in the Scriptures "The Gospel." Hence Jesus said: "Go preach the gospel to every creature." The Apostle Peter said:

"God made choice among us that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel and believe." Paul declared: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It therefore follows that the gospel must have been preached as a necessary antecedent condition of God's kingdom. We consequently find that the kingdom of God exists nowhere in earth where the gospel has not gone.

3. The Holy Spirit must have come in harmony with Christ's promise. Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of truth. When Pilate said, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus replied: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice" (John xviii. 37). Of course, we understand that Christ referred to spiritual truth. He did not come to reveal or bear witness to secular or scientific truth, that is discoverable by man through the natural channels that are open to him. But even in the domain of spiritual truth, which must come as a special gift, Christ did not complete the full revelation when here in person. He said to his disciples while yet present with them:

If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth (John xiv. 15-17).

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John xiv. 26).

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you (John xvi. 7).

From these passages we learn that the full measure of truth that belonged to the kingdom of God was to be completed by the coming of the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, which Christ said could not take place so long as he was here.

We are naturally led to consider,—

**IV. The maturing of all the necessary conditions which must of necessity bring us to the beginning of the kingdom.**

This necessarily involved a large amount of preparatory work. This preparation, as a matter of fact, extended through ages, and even millenniums, and the reasons for this will become very apparent as the nature of the work comes to be understood.

1. The purpose of God and the means of its accomplishment had to be made apparent. There is something which Paul calls "the eternal purpose of God." This purpose is nothing less than the salvation of man, which is a twofold blessing. It involves (1) a present salvation from the guilt, love, and practice of sin, and (2) a future or eternal salvation from the consequences of sin, in which man shall continue in a state of perfect holiness and consequent bliss. The kingdom of God contemplates in its blessings this great salvation, and its citizens are composed of those who enjoy this present salvation, and who hold the future salvation in prospect. Its King is the one through whom and by whom the great blessing is secured. This purpose was embodied in the promise to Abraham in the words: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

This promised seed Paul declares to be the Lord Jesus Christ. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He said not, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to thy seed," which is Christ.

2. The claims of the King had to be fully substantiated.

Extraordinary claims always call for extraordinary proof. Christ, the King, makes the most wonderful claims. He deliberately claims divinity. He declared (1) that he came from God; (2) that he existed with the Father before the world was; (3) that he was one with the Father; (4) that he fully

revealed the Father in his own personality; (5) that he was a divine King, and as such he claimed the homage and allegiance of men; (6) that he was going to the Father when he should leave this world; (7) that he would come a second time to call forth the dead from their graves and sit in judgment upon an assembled universe. In order to make good these wonderful claims, finger-boards were erected all along the ages, pointing forward to the coming One. Prophecy in word and symbol was freely given, by which the King and his kingdom were clearly pointed out in the minutest details by the most explicit specifications.

Finally, John, the harbinger, appeared, explicitly declaring the arrival of the King, and pointing him out. His work was, therefore, not to establish a kingdom, but to assist in getting men ready for one. His message was: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He came, as he said, in the fulfillment of prophecy, "To prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." When the King arrived, he proceeded to substantiate his most extraordinary claims by the most wonderful miraculous works and his still more wonderful teachings. In him a long line of prophecy was seen to have a perfect fulfillment.

3. The nature and fundamental principles of the kingdom had to be clearly set forth. This Christ accomplished during his personal ministry. He stated clearly the nature of his kingdom, disclaiming any intention of becoming a temporal ruler. He taught the great characteristic truths of his government, and attempted in all possible ways to disabuse the minds of the people, and of his disciples in particular, of their erroneous ideas concerning himself and his kingdom. But the most emphatic statements were not sufficient to destroy these false conceptions. His disciples, up to the time of his death, were expecting him to become a temporal ruler and to sit on the literal throne of David. "Wilt thou at this time

restore the kingdom of Israel?" Such words reveal the ideas his followers entertained. It is scarcely necessary to remark that Christ at this time certainly could have had no kingdom as an existing institution, since its nature was utterly misunderstood by even his most intimate followers. But after his resurrection from the dead, the great truth dawned upon the minds of his followers, and the kind of kingdom he came to establish was understood.

He also revealed himself in his threefold relation as Prophet, Priest, and King, thus, in the fullness of his work, meeting man's three great wants.

4. A nucleus of prepared persons had to be gotten ready.

Christ's personal work consisted in part of the education and training of the twelve apostles for the great work of establishing the kingdom of God in the world. These were to go forth as his witnesses and ambassadors, and they must, consequently, needs be instructed concerning the kingdom, and qualified for their work. This was a gradual process that extended over a period of three and a half years, but when it was done it was well done. Braver champions of the truth the world never saw. While this was being done, still others were prepared to receive this kingdom and to assist in subordinate positions in its establishment.

5. The great facts of the gospel had to be accomplished.

The gospel of Jesus Christ consists in the first place of certain facts to be believed. This necessarily leads to certain commands which are to be obeyed, and this is followed by certain promises to be enjoyed. We are left in no doubt as to what the facts of the gospel are. Paul gives us a clear and explicit statement in the following language: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand; by which, also, ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I

received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve . . . ." (I. Cor. xv. 1-5). If, then, the preaching of the gospel is necessary to prepare men for citizenship in the kingdom, these facts must have been accomplished before the kingdom was established. Christ, therefore, told his disciples plainly that "he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. xvi. 21). But this was utterly incomprehensible to the disciples, and when the officers came to arrest Jesus, Peter drew his sword to prevent it, and smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Jesus, however, rebuked him for the act, and calmly surrendered himself into the hands of his enemies. He was reaching the climatic point in his life and work, and he never wavered a moment in his purpose. He freely poured out his life. Having power to rescue himself, he nevertheless submitted to the will of his enemies. It was, however, a voluntary death on his part. He said, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John x. 17, 18). He slept at last in Joseph's tomb, but on the third day he rose from the grave by his own inherent power and might, thus bringing life and immortality to light, and accomplishing the great facts of the gospel. Thomas alone of the eleven remained for a time in doubt, but finally Christ submitted to the test he had named, and said to him, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing" (John xx. 27). Thomas is at once convinced and exclaims, "My Lord and my God!"



The great facts which Paul declared to be the gospel are now accomplished. Another majestic step toward the establishment of the kingdom has been taken.

6. The great consummating fact of the gospel, the resurrection of Christ, had to be firmly established. If this point be left in doubt, all would end in failure. Christ remained on earth forty days after his resurrection, and there are nine appearances recorded, which took place during this period. He appeared (1) to the women on the morning of the resurrection; (2) to Peter, very soon after; (3) to two disciples, on the evening of the same day, as they went to Emmaus; (4) to the ten, on the same evening, as they were assembled in Jerusalem, Thomas being absent; (5) to the eleven, one week later, Thomas being present; (6) to several disciples on the shore of Galilee, and ate with them; (7) to about five hundred at one time on a mountain in Galilee; (8) to James alone; (9) to the eleven at the time of the ascension. After his ascension, he appeared once to Saul of Tarsus, to qualify him for the apostleship, and once to John on Patmos. During the time Jesus remained on earth, he subjected himself to every possible test. He talked with his disciples; ate with them; told them to handle him, thus seeking in every way to remove any possible doubts that they might have entertained. That he succeeded, is shown by the fact that these disciples never wavered in their faith in Christ's resurrection, showing themselves willing to die for their faith, rather than surrender it.

7. The law of citizenship had to be declared.

This law is clearly brought out in Christ's commission to his disciples, which is recorded in the following language:

All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth: go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (Matt. xxviii. 18-20).

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark xvi. 15, 16).

Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke xxiv. 46, 47).

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained (John xx. 22, 23).

From these Scriptures the following points may readily be gleaned: (1) That it was Christ's purpose to have the gospel preached in all the world; (2) that the conditions of salvation from sin, as announced by Christ, were faith, repentance, and baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; (3) that persons complying with these conditions have the promise of pardon. These conditions constitute not only the law of pardon, but also the law of citizenship, since the same steps that eventuate in pardon lead also to citizenship.

Paul says of the saved or pardoned persons: "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly joined together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. ii. 19-22).

8. The king had to be seated on the throne.

Jesus having commissioned his disciples, told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be indued with power from on high. This instruction was in perfect keeping with his former promise, that if he should go away he would send them the Comforter, who would teach them all things. He then led them up into the Mount of Olives, east of the city of Jerusalem, and after he had given them his last instructions, telling Peter to feed his lambs and sheep, he rose up from their midst.

and passed out of their sight, returning to that heaven from whence he had come on his mission of love and mercy to a lost world. While the disciples stood gazing up into heaven after their ascending Lord, two angels appeared and said to them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11).

There is, however, one important difference that should ever be borne in mind. Jesus will certainly come in like manner as he ascended, but his second mission will be far different from his first. He will not come to be mocked and buffeted, and persecuted, and slain, but he will come "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," and, blessed be God, he will come to make up his jewels and take his ransomed people home. Upon the prophetic chariot of David, we are enabled to follow Jesus, and hear what is said as he neared the portals of the celestial city. The commandment went forth: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." And the reply comes back, "Who is the King of glory?" and the answer is heard, "The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Once more the reply comes back, "Who is the King of glory?" and again the answer is made, "The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory" (Psa. xxiv. 7-10).

Then the gates are lifted up, and Jesus, together with his triumphal procession, composed doubtless of many of the saints who had risen from the dead when Christ unlocked the doors of the unseen world at the time of his resurrection, passed within the portals of the eternal city amidst exultant shouts of angels and thrilling strains of heavenly music.

Then the King takes the throne that he is to occupy until he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power, and all enemies have been subdued unto him. Then will he surrender the kingdom to God, the Father, that he may be all in all.

Another sublime step has been taken. The King is seated on his throne. Henceforth "to him shall the gathering of the people be."

Before proceeding to the final consummation, it may be well to briefly review the preparatory steps by which God has moved majestically forward to the accomplishment of his great purpose.

First, then, we have the eternal purpose of God that contemplates the salvation of man from the thralldom of sin and his elevation to the fellowship of God and to the society of unfallen spirits. When man made his appearance on earth and failed under the testing process to which he was subjected, this purpose of God is revealed somewhat obscurely to our first mother in a promise that her seed should bruise the serpent's head. Ages moved slowly onward while God's preparation progressed, until finally the great purpose is embodied in a promise to Abraham, the father of the faithful. Then followed the development of the elect typical nation with its typical worship, pointing forward to the spiritual kingdom for which God was preparing the world by his wonderful providence. Then came the prophets, the mighty men of God, whose mission was to reform and instruct the typical nation, and to keep the eyes of all fixed upon the coming King and his kingdom.

Then came John the Baptist, to prepare the way for the Lord and make his paths straight. At last, he for whom the ages had waited appeared. His whole personal ministry here on earth was occupied in preparation for the kingdom, until he ascended to occupy the throne. Up to this time the work

was all preparatory; each one elected in the wisdom and providence of God had simply done a preparatory work. God was getting ready to establish a kingdom such as the world had never seen before, that was to conquer all opposing powers and finally fill the whole earth.

No gospel sermon had ever yet been preached, except the gospel of promise. Now, for the first time, the facts could be published to the world. Great as was the mission of Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Elijah, and Isaiah, and John, and hosts of other mighty men of Israel and Judah, none had ever had the privilege of preaching the gospel in fact, for the simple reason that the facts had not yet occurred. True, Paul says (Gal. iii. 8) that the gospel was preached to Abraham, and in referring to the chosen people, he says (Heb. iv. 2): "Unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them," but it is perfectly clear that Paul means by this, the gospel of promise and the good news concerning a promised Saviour. The gospel in fact could not have been preached before the facts occurred.

This process is illustrated in the history of any great enterprise that men inaugurate. The construction of a line of railroad would be an example in point. First the road exists in the purpose, either of some man or of a company of men. This corresponds to God's eternal purpose embracing the gospel. Then this purpose is probably embodied in a promise to build the road. This corresponds to the promise to Abraham. Then come the prophets, who tell of the coming road, describe it perhaps in detail, and unfold its blessings. This corresponds to the work of the prophets of Israel and Judah. Then the track is surveyed by the harbingers, and the path is made straight. Here is the illustration of the work of John the Baptist. Then the grading is done, and the ties and rails are placed. This illustrates the personal work of Christ while

here on earth. These are the steps by which God's great highway for the nations was constructed.

We are now ready to consider,—

**V. The complete work of God's great purpose realized.**

1. The waiting, expecting disciples first arrest our attention. While the coronation ceremonies are in progress in heaven, the disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem, in obedience to Christ's instructions, are waiting for the promised blessing. This interval is spent in prayer and supplication. Seven days are spent in this manner, but they were by no means wasted days. This season of prayer and supplication furnished the needed preparation for the great blessing that was soon to follow.

2. The next striking incident that arrests our attention is the descent of the Holy Spirit. "When the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place, and suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder like as fire, and it sat upon each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts ii. 1-4).

Now the promise of Christ is fulfilled. The Spirit of truth has come to assist in the founding of the kingdom of truth, by leading Christ's ambassadors into all truth. Now the great message for which the world had waited can be completed. The apostles can now enter upon the work to which they had been commissioned.

3. The sermon of Peter next demands our attention. How quick is the response when all is ready. At once the voice of the inspired apostle sounds out the gospel message. Concerning this sermon of Peter's we observe: (1) That he makes

the startling events just witnessed the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy; (2) that he declares the death of Christ, and also his resurrection, asserting that the disciples were witnesses of that great fact; (3) that he declares the resurrection of Christ to be the fulfillment of David's prophecy recorded in Psa. xvi. 10: "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption"; (4) that the risen Lord had been exalted to the right hand of God, there to reign until his enemies were made his footstool.

Notice how closely all this corresponds with Paul's definition of the gospel. Here, for the first time, the gospel in fact was preached.

4. The results were as wonderful as they were gratifying. A multitude of those who heard this sermon "were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter at once proceeds to use the key Christ had given into his hands, and opens the door of the kingdom by declaring the law of pardon. To the enquiring believers he said: "Repent ye and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins"—or, as the Revised Version has it, "into the remission of your sins"—"and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." About three thousand yielded themselves in obedience to these commands, and thus became citizens of the kingdom. Now, for the first time, the kingdom exists as an actual fact.

5. All the elements of the kingdom are present: (1) The King is seated upon his throne; (2) the territory may be considered as spiritual and consisting of the prepared hearts of the citizens of the kingdom. When the hearts of men everywhere are turned to God through Christ, the whole world will be his. We may also consider the whole earth as Christ's territory; (3) the law of citizenship, as given by Christ in his commission, has been announced by the inspired apostle;

(4) three thousand persons have acted upon it, and have, consequently been introduced into the kingdom, and constitute its citizens.

6. All other essential conditions of the kingdom are met.

(1) The gospel, by which men are prepared for the kingdom, was preached. (2) The Holy Spirit which Christ promised, and which was to operate in establishing the kingdom of truth, through the inspired teachers, is present. This must have been something new and different from anything before enjoyed, since Christ declared that this coming could not take place, so long as he remained in person. (3) This is the right time for the setting up of the kingdom. It perfectly harmonizes the language of John and Christ, pointing forward to the coming kingdom, and with the language of the apostles uttered afterward, declaring its existence. It is the intermediate point of time between the two. (4) It came at the right place. Micah had declared that "the law should go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The law of Moses was promulgated from Sinai, but it was God's purpose that the new law should go forth from Jerusalem. Luke therefore said in recording the commission: "Thus it is written and thus it behooved Christ to suffer to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." In the establishment of the kingdom these utterances are wondrously fulfilled. (5) The right man opened the door. Jesus had said to Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Peter is, accordingly, the one to introduce the first citizens. (6) The citizens were built on the right foundation. Paul said: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus." Here, for the first time, this foundation is actually laid as the basis of faith. Peter preached a crucified and risen Redeemer, and the people believed on him. It was not a faith in dogmas, but trust in a person.



**Conclusion :** Having found the beginning of the kingdom, several advantages are gained: (1) We see just what it is necessary to preach in order to prepare men to enter it; (2) we see what men did in becoming citizens of the kingdom; (3) we also have brought before us the blessings which those who enter the kingdom enjoy, viz., remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In view of all this, our duty becomes plain. It devolves upon us to assist to the utmost of our ability in enlarging the borders of this kingdom. Peter said in the close of his sermon: "For to you is the promise and your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him."

We, standing nearly two millenniums this side of the beginning of the kingdom, have heard this call. Let us catch it up and bear it forward until at last the prophetic vision shall be realized, when the knowledge of God shall cover the world as the waters the sea, and the kingdom shall extend from the river to the ends of earth.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FAITH.

**Introduction :** 1. Acceptance with God rests on two great pillars for support: (1) On the divine side it rests on mercy and grace. "Not by works or righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us." "For by grace are ye saved." "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men." Everything that God has done is the outgrowth of his mercy. But while grace is the basis on the divine side, it nevertheless springs from an adequate cause. God's favor proceeds from his love, therefore we read, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." (2) On the human side, it rests on faith. The Scriptures make the cheering declaration that, "In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." We also read, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." It therefore follows that man is competent to fear or reverence God and keep his commandments. A moment's reflection, however, will convince any one that this is not fundamental. Before there can be fear or obedience, there must be something out of which both proceed. The Scripture clearly reveals what this is. We are told that, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." Here we reach the bed-rock on the human side; but as God's favor is the outgrowth of his love, so here faith (Christian faith, or faith in Christ) proceeds from our love to God. Hence Jesus declared the first commandment to be, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind." Here,

then, we have man's salvation resting on the two great pillars of divine grace and human faith, and all growing out of the great principle of love. On the one side, God's love for man, and on the other, man's love for God.

2. The importance of faith at once looms up and seems to overshadow everything else pertaining to the human side of the question of salvation. To exaggerate its importance would be impossible; nor should we regard this as at all strange, since it is a principle of highest value in all affairs of the present life. (1) Business life, in all its multiplied activities and diversified forms, has its basis in faith. Without faith, the wheels of commerce would be at once clogged. Destroy this principle, and the whole business fabric would totter to its downfall. (2) Social life rests on faith. The family, the most blessed institution on earth, would be overthrown were it not for faith. (3) The state would fall in ruin were it not for faith. (4) The growth of science and literature would be at once checked, and education would become impossible, were it not for faith.

These considerations make it apparent that faith is the grandest force that operates on society. It is the propelling force that moves mankind in its grandest marches and noblest achievements.

3. It is, therefore, not an arbitrary decree of God that has made faith the basis of acceptable religious life. It is a necessary principle lying at the basis of all human action in whatever domain it may be put forth. To assert that spiritual life and enjoyment result from faith, is to assert the necessary relation of cause and effect.

In our investigation of this subject, we will consider,—

#### **I. Some special applications and uses of the term "Faith."**

By a sort of metonymy it is used to express,—

1. The Christian system, or the body of testimony composed of the doctrines and precepts that make up the system.

{1} In Acts xiii. 8, we read: "Elymas the sorcerer sought to turn the deputy from the faith." Acts xxiv. 24: "But after certain days Felix came with Drusilla his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus." (3) Galatians i. 23: "He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc." (4) Galatians iii. 2: "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (5) Galatians iii. 23: "But before faith came we were kept under the law." (6) Philippians i. 27: "I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul, striving for the faith of the gospel." In these passages, as well as in many others that might be cited, the word "faith" is used in a very broad and comprehensive sense. It is, however, an objective use of the word, the outward system of Christianity as a whole being designated.

2. The precepts that are to be obeyed: (1) Romans i. 5: "By whom we received grace and apostleship unto obedience of faith." (2) Romans xvi. 26: . . . "Is made known unto all nations unto obedience of faith." (3) Hebrews xi. 4: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." (4) Acts vi. 7: . . . "A great company of priests were obedient to the faith."

Here the word is used in a more restricted sense, being taken to designate, instead of the whole, as in the foregoing, only a part. Obedience to the faith evidently means obedience to the precepts or commands of the gospel.

3. That which results in godly life or activity, and hence, in some degree, involving the will power: Romans i. 8: "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world." (2) I. Thessalonians i. 3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith." (3) II. Thessalonians i. 11: . . . "That our God may count you worthy of your calling and fulfill every desire of goodness and every work of faith with power."

4. The confidence resulting from faith: (1) Matthew viii. 10: "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." This expression was called forth from Christ by the fact that the centurion had confidence that Christ could heal his servant without even seeing him. (2) Matthew ix. 22: "Daughter, be of good cheer: thy faith hath made thee whole." The woman had such confidence that healing virtue resided in Christ that she said: "If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole." (3) Mark ii. 5: "And Jesus, seeing their faith, saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." The faith here spoken of was the confidence in the healing power of Jesus that prompted those who bore the man sick with the palsy to let him down through the roof of the house into the presence of Jesus.

## II. The nature of faith.

1. As determined from the meaning of the word. The Greek word, "*piśis*," translated "faith" in the Scripture, is defined by Liddell and Scott to be "trust in another, faith, especially faith or belief in a higher power. Generally persuasion of a thing, confidence, assurance." The verb from "*pisteuo*," translated "believe," means "to trust or put faith in; to rely on a person or thing." We must conclude from these classic definitions (1) that faith as respects facts or principles is simply a belief or persuasion that they are true; (2) as respects persons, it is confidence or trust in them in such attitudes and relations as they are presented to us by the testimony given.

2. As determined by its Scripture use.

(a) It is confidence or assurance, and also foundation. In Hebrew xi. 1, we read: "Now faith is assurance of things hoped for, the proving [or conviction] of things not seen." "*Hupostasis*," here rendered "assurance," means that which stands under or whereon anything rests. Taken objectively,

it is the foundation of our hope, or of things hoped for; subjectively, it is assurance or confidence. This is, however, born of the other, since the foundation gives confidence in that which is built on it.

(b) It is conviction or persuasion, and also demonstration. In the foregoing passage "*Elegchos*," translated "proving or conviction," means, in its objective sense, demonstration or proof; subjectively, it means conviction or persuasion. Using these words in an objective sense, the passage would read, "Faith is the foundation of things hoped for, the demonstration of things not seen." Using the subjective sense, the passage reads, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Hence, faith subjectively is both assurance and conviction; objectively, it is both foundation and demonstration.

This subjective use of the term "faith" is illustrated in the example of Abraham's faith given in Romans iv. 20, 21, "He [Abraham] wavered not through unbelief, but waxed strong through faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what he [God] had promised, he was able also to perform." He is called "strong through faith," because he was "fully assured" that God would fulfill his promise. Evidently this is the same sense as that given to it in the passage from Hebrews quoted above; that is to say, it is the ordinary subjective use of the word.

It should be noted, in this connection, that faith in its various uses covers a very large field. It unlocks the door of the past and pulls aside the curtain of the future. The knowledge, therefore, that it gives us is much wider than that which comes through the physical senses, and herein man is lifted infinitely above the plane of the animal. If we were confined in our knowledge to the evidence furnished by these senses, our field would be very much circumscribed. The natural eye and ear can know but a small world. Aided by the microscope

and telescope, we may have a larger world, but still it is very limited, but by the eye of faith, we can lay hold of that which we have never seen, and can never see with the eye of sense, and thus dwell amidst the beauties that never fade. Hence, says Paul, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things that God has prepared for them that love him." Holland says, "For a great man, a thousand minds are thinking and a thousand hands are working." But this is because we are enabled by faith to appropriate the experience of others and incorporate their lives into our own. Thus the realities of the past, as stored up on the pages of history, become ours, and the possibilities of the future are placed within our grasp. Even the curtain that separates us from the most holy place is drawn aside, and we are permitted to see the invisible realities of the spiritual universe, and to dwell by faith in the presence of God. Here, in fact, is the highest function of faith.

The highest faith is a conviction of the existence of a home of the soul beyond the veil of the flesh, an assurance of the reality of an unseen spiritual world. The faith that apprehends these things becomes the foundation of Christian character and the fountain of Christian enjoyment.

(c) It lays hold of the heart.

Paul declares (Rom. x. 10): "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." There is no more important utterance pertaining to this subject than this. The word "*Kardia*," translated "heart," in its primary signification, means the heart as the seat of life. Metaphorically it means the heart as the seat of feeling, passion, or impulse. In other words, it means the desires, affections, emotions. Had Paul wished to convey the idea that faith or belief was a purely intellectual process, there was a word at his command that he could have used that would have made his meaning clear. Had he said, With the mind ("*Noos*") man believeth unto righteousness, we

would have understood that the belief referred to was purely intellectual. I am aware that "*Kardia*" is used as a synonym of "*Noos*," yet it means more than simple intellectual belief. It means affection or feeling as the result of the intellectual process, or as growing out of it. Hence it is possible for a man to believe with the mind ("*Noos*"), and yet not believe with the heart ("*Kardia*"). As a matter of fact, these two kinds of belief are very wide apart: (1) One is active, the other is passive. For illustration: Two young men may listen to a witness in whom they have confidence, bear testimony concerning the legal profession. He may tell them about the preparation needed, the nature of the work, the emoluments offered, and the opportunities for good afforded. Both believe all he says; one becomes a lawyer, the other does not. Why this difference in the result? The foregoing distinction fully explains the reason. One believed intellectually, with the mind ("*Noos*"), the other believed emotionally, desiringly, lovingly, with the heart ("*Kardia*").

If I mistake not, in this distinction is found the reason why God's approbation or condemnation can be predicated on faith. Purely intellectual faith is often not a ground of merit, nor is the lack of it a demerit. Sometimes such faith is absolutely necessary. The individual can not avoid it. The testimony may be so strong as to compel faith, and when this is the case there is no merit in believing. I believe that there is such a country as Africa, and that it has many millions of inhabitants, but I deserve no praise for such faith. It is a necessity. The testimony is such as to forbid disbelief. On the other hand, disbelief may not be censurable. If the testimony is inadequate, faith is an impossibility. I may not believe that Jupiter is inhabited, simply because the testimony is insufficient to necessitate faith, and if this be the case, I can not be censured for unbelief. There is, however, a faith that can be justly made a ground of approval, and its lack may be a



ground of condemnation, and that is the faith of which Paul speaks, when he says: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." This faith is not a necessity. As to whether belief takes hold of the heart depends on the man. If my faith concerning Africa and its people should so take hold of my heart as to prompt me to give my life for the salvation of the dark continent, it might be regarded by God as a ground of approval. If I do not allow my belief concerning Africa and its people to so touch my heart or emotions so as to prompt me to do my duty in the premises, I may be condemned for my unbelief.

True, there may be a certain amount of merit in intellectual faith. A man may deserve some approval for opening his ears to testimony; for opening his eyes to light; but when once the testimony comes, if it be adequate, he deserves no praise for believing it, since he can not do otherwise; nor if it be inadequate does he deserve blame for disbelieving, since he can not believe. But when once he believes intellectually, he can be praised or censured for the belief or disbelief of the heart, since this is a matter under his control.

I believe it perfectly safe to say that nine-tenths of the infidelity of the world to-day, is infidelity of the heart. Many people suppose that unbelief is purely intellectual, but my observation convinces me that it is a disease of the heart, and not of the head, in most cases. Some are not believers because of their pride; some because of an intellectual vanity; some because of worldly interests; some because of passions or pleasures with which they think faith would interfere; all of which means that most of the infidelity has its seat in the emotions, or affections, or feelings. Hence, Paul says: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Certainly this must be true. Righteousness can never result in any other way. This is perfectly harmonious with a great and universal principle. All true action springs from the heart.

With the heart man believes unto the practice of medicine ; unto the practice of law ; unto the work of the ministry ; unto every kind of business life ; unto every form of Christian activity. Hence, says Jesus : " He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." The philosophy of this utterance is hence very apparent. Faith that is merely an intellectual exercise proceeding from indubitable testimony, which does not affect any interest, nor call for action, can have no moral quality, but when I am called upon to believe something that is of personal application, and which would completely change my life, were I to accept it, then it becomes, not simply a matter of the intellect, but a question of the heart. Here is something that reaches the emotions or feelings. It may cause me joy or sorrow, according to its nature. It may require me to surrender selfish plans and hopes, yet if I heroically allow the testimony to have its force and work out its necessary consequences, I believe with my heart. This is an act of faith that God can approve. This is the faith of Jesus. It is radical in its nature and effects. It allows no temporizing or compromise. It demands the whole space of the human heart, and will not share this kingdom with any rival power. All selfishness must be cast out. It calls for consecration to the highest, purest service. It consequently demands crucifixion of self. Hence, says Christ : " If a man would be a disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me daily." When, in the face of all this, we permit the faith of Jesus to control us, we have God's approval ; but if we refuse to allow this faith to become the controlling force of our lives, the condemnation of God is upon us ; nay, more, we condemn ourselves by assassinating our convictions of right, and proving ourselves to be traitors to the truth. In other words, damnation is married to unbelief, as effect is married to cause.



(d) It results in action.

This follows from what has been already said concerning faith of the heart, but there is no lack of Scripture testimony bearing on this point. (1) Acts viii. 12: "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (2) Rom. xvi. 25, 26: "Now to him that is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all nations unto obedience of faith; to the only wise God through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever." According to this passage, faith ought to eventuate in obedience, and we see that it did in the case of those who believed Philip's preaching. The commission of Christ is perfectly harmonious with this. (3) James emphasizes the same thought. "What doth it profit if a man say he hath faith but have not works? can that faith save him? . . . Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith and I have works; show me thy faith apart from thy works, and I, by my works, will show thee my faith. . . . But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren" (Jas. ii. 14, 17, 18, 20).

(e) It is personal in its object.

The necessity for this becomes apparent the moment we recognize the fact that character is built up through the principle of imitation. Man is by nature an imitative being. This propensity manifests itself in early childhood, and is never lost. We become what we are, not by means of certain abstract principles held in the mind, but by copying the concrete embodiment of those principles. By faith, therefore, we are transformed into the likeness of that in which we trust.

It is, therefore, very important that we should have the proper object of faith set before us, and it is fortunate for us that the Scriptures are very clear on this point. (1) Paul said to the jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31). (2) Peter said, when preaching to Cornelius and his household: "To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him [Christ] shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). (3) Jesus himself said: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16).

This faith in the personal Christ involves a belief in his threefold office. (1) God said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. iii. 17). Here the office of prophet or teacher is set forth. (2) That Christ was a priest is also clearly taught. Paul declares we have "a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that within the veil, whither, as a forerunner, Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." Also he says: "And what we say is yet more abundantly evident, if after the likeness of Melchisedec there arises another priest who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life, for it is witnessed of him, 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec'" (Heb. vi. 19, 20; vii. 15-17). (3) The kingship of Jesus is also declared. Paul charged Timothy to "keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in its own times he shall show, who is blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I. Tim. vi. 14, 15). Hence it follows that faith in Jesus demands our acceptance of him in the threefold relation of Prophet, Priest, and King, and in this threefold function he meets every fundamental human need.

The object of our faith, therefore, is the Son of God in his official relations to humanity. It is personal, and not doctrinal. It is an affectionate trust in one who, in his own person, embodies every perfection, and is therefore a perfect model, and who has infinite resources at his command, and, therefore, can meet our every want. Hence, says Paul: "Who was made unto us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I. Cor. i. 30, 31). Well has he been called both Son of man and Son of God. As Son of man, he is a perfect pattern for humanity and the brother of the race. As Son of God, he is "Captain of our salvation" and "Lord over all." As Son of man, he died as man must die; but as Son of God, "behold he is alive for evermore," and his voice will call forth the sleeping millions from the dust of the earth. He died for our sins and rose again for our justification, and "he has the keys of death and of Hades." "Though he was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation." Peter, in his Pentecostal sermon, declared that Christ, "being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this [the manifestation of the Holy Spirit] which ye see and hear. . . . Let all of the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ," and Paul declares: "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Therefore, holding in his hand the scepter of the universe, "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him."

How restful is such a faith! What a sense of security does such a trust convey! It is, indeed, a serious, solemn thing to put one's self—life, character, and destiny—into the keeping of another, both for time and eternity. To warrant

such an act, the one to whom the soul is committed must be more than man—yea, he must be God; and therefore the divinity of Christ is the only rational ground of faith. Hence says Jesus: I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me." This being true, there is no grander, sublimer act the soul can perform than to commit itself to his keeping.

The Christian faith is, therefore, very simple. Trust in a Divine Person who has furnished the most ample grounds of confidence and acceptance of him as the sovereign of the soul, is entirely within the possibilities of the humblest individual. Some stay away from Christ because of their failure to comprehend certain theological doctrines. It is a lamentable thing that theological tenets have been made tests of faith, and it is a still more lamentable thing that souls have been driven away from their Saviour by these speculative theological dogmas.

When will men learn that the faith that saves is not the belief of dogmas? When will the world realize that a man may fail to comprehend the doctrines of original sin, predestination, foreknowledge, the trinity, the incarnation, and many other things too deep to be measured by the human mind, and still be saved by a simple, personal trust in the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world"? Listen to the voice of Paul to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," and know that these words apply to you. Are you ready to hear these words and accept them in all their divine simplicity?

### III. How is faith produced?

1. It is often a waste of time for a man to concern himself with questions of "how." The "how" of things is often entirely beyond human comprehension. In fact, this is usually the case with things that belong entirely to God. We do not know how the plant grows, nor how mind is married to matter,

as in the case of man. God is doing things in nature all around us that we do not understand. We see processes and phenomena, and name them, but we do not understand them. However, when we come to the human side of things, we find much less of mystery, and especially is this true when we come into the field of human duty and activity. God has taken care that man may know how to do whatever he is required to do.

It follows, therefore, that faith is produced by a process that can be comprehended, since it is a duty enjoined upon man. Faith being a command of God, man can certainly obey it, and if so, he can know how to obey it. It must certainly be produced by a process or in a manner that man can comprehend, or God would not demand it and make it a condition of salvation.

It is, however, a strange fact that some minds find a peculiar fascination in that which is mysterious or incomprehensible. The more religion is mystified the more some are attached to it, and anything that is plain and simple is, for that very reason, to be rejected. Such persons, when they come to the Bible, suppose they are entering a region of fogs and mists. The Word of God is to such not a revelation, but a mystery that is not man's privilege to try to understand or comprehend. How inconsistent is this with the oft-repeated injunctions of the sacred writers, "to think," "consider," "hear with the ears," "see with the eyes," "understand with the heart."

The fact is, the gospel of Christ proceeds on clearly defined and necessary principles. It recognizes the laws of the human understanding in addressing man.

2. We consequently conclude that faith is produced in harmony with the constitution of the human mind. In its coming it does not violate the necessary laws of human thought. To understand the process by which faith is produced, we have,

therefore, but to study the necessary conditions of faith as it deals with the affairs of every-day life. Take, for example, faith in any historic character, as, for instance, Julius Cæsar. How is such faith produced? What does the mind constitutionally demand in order to such faith? Evidently testimony on the subject that is convincing. No one ever believed in any historic character except on testimony. True, the testimony that produces faith in one person, may fail to produce faith in another, but in every case the faith rests on testimony. An important distinction should be carefully noted in this connection. The Christian faith is not belief in something about Jesus, as we would believe the facts about Julius Cæsar upon testimony, but it is trust in Jesus. It is the faith of the heart. How is this produced? I answer, How is trust in anyone produced? How am I led to believe in or trust a physician so I will put my life into his hands? Evidently I must have testimony of such a nature as to beget in me confidence in the man. Then will I trust him. Whether I believe something about a man, or believe in a man, my faith must rest on testimony of convincing character. I have never seen San Francisco. How can my faith in the existence of such a city be established? Evidently by testimony. How can I be led to remove to that city and trust it for a home? Evidently in the same way, by some form of testimony. How can I be led to believe that such a person as Jesus of Nazareth lived, worked, taught, died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven? Evidently on testimony. How can I be led to trust him for salvation? Certainly in the same way. If I realize that I am afflicted with the moral malady of sin, for which man can offer no cure, and become convinced, upon adequate testimony, that he is the Great Physician, both able and willing to save, I will trust him for salvation.

Why do I believe that there is such a place as heaven? Because I have testimony that is convincing. If the testimony



satisfies me that it is a desirable place, and attainable by me, I will endeavor to reach it.

We are now ready to draw a clear line of distinction between faith and opinion. Faith rests on adequate, or clear and convincing testimony. Opinion results from inadequate evidence, or from testimony not well understood. I may have an opinion that there is a populous city in the heart of Africa, based on testimony not well authenticated, or resulting from a course of hypothetical or probable reasoning. I believe that there is such a city as London, because I have ample testimony that can not be doubted. This distinction is very vital, because not only has the simple faith in Christ been displaced by faith in theological dogmas, but even opinions have been exalted to the domain of faith, and frequently have been made tests of fellowship.

3. The direct utterances of the Scriptures very clearly indicate how faith is produced, and it will be seen that the teaching is entirely harmonious with the logical and constitutional demands of the mind: (1) John v. 46, 47: "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (2) John xx. 30, 31: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples that are not written in this book, but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye may have life in his name." (3) Romans x. 14: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (4) Acts xv. 7: "Peter rose up and said to them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel and believe." These passages, as well as many others that might be introduced, make it perfectly clear that the

Christian faith, like all other faith, must rest on testimony; but if a single doubt be still entertained, surely the language of Paul, in Romans x. 16, 17, will remove it. (5) "But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." There is no rising up against such words as these. Faith results from testimony. It "comes by hearing." This is both the voice of reason and the voice of inspiration.

4. It should, however, be borne in mind that faith is the gift of God. God has given us the true object of faith in the gift of his Son. He has made the human mind capable of believing. He has furnished us with ample testimony as a basis for our faith; consequently, when we give attention to the testimony and are led to believe, the faith, in a very real and important sense, may be said to be the gift of God.

It is unfortunate that the very plain and simple matter should have been obscured by the teaching that faith is an immediate and direct gift of God. Sinners are sometimes taught that no one can possess faith until God directly bestows it, and they are exhorted to pray for it and to continue their seeking and supplication till it shall please God to give it. There is a logical difficulty in the way of such teaching, that it is hard to see how any one could have overlooked. We are told that, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." Prayer, to be efficacious with God, must be an act of faith. Then how is the sinner to begin? He can not pray without faith, and if he have faith, then why pray for it? Paul (Romans x. 14) states the case very strongly: "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" The conclusion is inevitable that, if faith is a direct gift of God, the sinner can do nothing but wait atheistically and prayerlessly until it please God to bestow it. But you ask, Is it not proper to pray for faith? Certainly, having faith in God, pray for faith—that is, for more

faith—just as you would pray for daily bread. When we say, “Give us this day our daily bread,” we do not expect God to give it to us immediately, but through the means and channels he has ordained. So, when we pray for an increase of faith, we simply ask God to grant it in harmony with his ordained means and in accordance with the constitution of the human mind.

To support the doctrine that faith is a direct gift of God, Paul’s language in Eph. ii. 8, 9, is often used: “For by grace have ye been saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” There are, however, at least two difficulties standing in the way of such a use of this passage: (1) If Paul meant that faith is the gift of God, it does not follow that it is an immediate gift to be bestowed by God directly in answer to prayer. On the contrary, the passage ought to be interpreted in harmony with other clear and explicit teaching on this subject, which represents faith as coming mediately, that is, by hearing. A gift is no less a gift because bestowed on necessary and plainly expressed conditions. (2) There is, moreover, a grammatical reason for rejecting this interpretation. “By grace have ye been saved, through faith [*“pistis,”* a feminine noun]; and that [*“touto,”* a neuter pronoun] not of yourselves: the gift of God.” The clause, “it is,” is supplied; that is, these words are not original. Here *“touto,”* a neuter pronoun, can not stand for the feminine *“pistis,”* but it has the whole sentence for its antecedent. Hence, it is the salvation spoken of in the sentence that is not of ourselves, and the last clause, “the gift of God,” is in apposition with this, and, therefore, it is the salvation that is declared to be God’s gift, and not faith. This exegesis is sustained by the best commentators, and it may be regarded as the true sense of the passage beyond the possibility of a doubt.

We are hence led to conclude that common sense, the logical necessities of the case, and the Word of God agree in declaring that “faith comes by hearing.”

#### IV. The benefits of faith.

1. It secures salvation by laying hold of him who is the "Author of eternal salvation," and besides whom there is no other Saviour, for God has "given him a name that is above every name," and we are expressly told that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

2. It is the mainspring of all right action. From within, out of the heart, are the issues of life; therefore, says James, "By works is faith made perfect." In other words, the complete sphere of life is made up of the two hemispheres of faith and works.

3. It purifies the heart. Peter says (Acts xv. 9): "And he [God] made no distinction between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles], cleansing their hearts by faith." This is perfectly consistent with reason, and harmonious with all observation and experience.

Since character is built upon the principle of imitation, faith in a pure person who becomes our model must necessarily lead to purity of life. How often is this exemplified in the experiences of men. Many a man has had his heart made purer and his life made better by his faith in a pure man or pure woman. Much more, then, will faith in the immaculate Son of God purify the heart.

4. It sanctifies all our actions and broadens our sympathies by imbuing our lives with the spirit of love. Paul says: "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love" (Gal. v. 6). Too long have the sympathies of men been bounded by the lines that divide the world into races, nations, castes, and classes. Too long have men continued to regard the merely accidental circumstances attaching to men the matters of chiefest moment. Surely the time has come when man's patent to nobility should consist in something intrinsic, and not

merely in the accidental. Paul tells us how this much-to-be-coveted end is to be reached: "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." No longer are questions of race, nationality or caste to be the great questions, "but faith working by love" will overleap all barriers and bind this great humanity into a common brotherhood. This is the legitimate result of the Christian faith. Faith in Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, is destined to bind all men in a loving, sympathetic brotherhood:

"When each can feel his brother's sigh,  
And with him bear a part.  
When sorrow flows from eye to eye,  
And joy from heart to heart."

Then our sympathy, our love, our efforts for all men will not be determined by nationality, or color of skin, or family, or riches, or position, or any accidental circumstance, but there will be but one great thing on earth worthy of our love, and that is man.

Therefore, "in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision." These accidents are unimportant as controlling forces, "but faith working by love" will be the motive power propelling us forward and leading to noble, unselfish lives on the broad plain of a common humanity.

## CHAPTER VII.

### REPENTANCE.

**Introduction :** 1. The great purpose of the gospel can not be understood without a consideration of the problem with which it has to deal.

The Sacred Scriptures and human consciousness unite in bearing testimony to the awful fact of sin. God's Word assumes its existence and proceeds to deal with it as a serious, but not necessarily fatal, malady. Men may not stop to analyze or explain it, yet no right-minded man calls in question the awful reality. All feel and see that there is both good and bad, righteousness and unrighteousness, vice and virtue, right and wrong. This question is, however, by no means simple. It involves many difficult and perplexing problems. To understand it we must bear in mind the following points :

- (1) As to its nature : It is rebellion against God.
- (2) As to its source : It proceeds out of the heart.
- (3) As to its practice : It determines the course or habit of life.
- (4) As to its effects upon the individual : It is polluting and debasing.
- (5) As to the conditions it superinduces : It involves guilt.
- (6) As to its merit : It calls for condemnation by self, man, and God.
- (7) As to its wages : It involves death.

It is the great purpose of the gospel to save man from sin. In accomplishing this it must purify the heart, change the life

or practice, cleanse the guilt, destroy the effects, remove the condemnation, and thus determine the destiny.

2. Salvation is, therefore, not an exercise of arbitrary power. If God, in the exercise of his omnipotent power, should transport the sinner from earth to heaven, it would not save him. Mere change of place is not salvation. Many speak of going to heaven as if it was merely a question of changing location. This is a great mistake. Salvation involves a change far more radical. To put the sinner, corrupt in heart and life, into a heaven of infinite purity, would be to plunge him into torments intolerable.

The salvation of man begins in the heart. The evil, sinful, corrupt heart must be purified, and this can not be accomplished by a direct and arbitrary act of God's power. To do so would be to override and destroy the principles of man's intellectual and moral nature. If the heart is changed, it must be done in harmony with the constitutional requirements of man's soul. It must proceed in harmony with psychological principles. Therefore, to change the heart, the sinner must be enlightened and persuaded. He must be influenced by motives, and not changed by an arbitrary act of omnipotence. Salvation also involves man's life of outward action. This must be changed, but this can not be done by any arbitrary act of power. Action that is not voluntary and free has no moral quality.

These considerations lead us to the conclusion that,—

3. The system of salvation is a system of means adapted to ends. Is the heart to be changed, the plan of salvation provides the means of accomplishing this without overriding or destroying the principles of man's moral or intellectual being. Is the life to be changed, the gospel provides means adapted to the end to be accomplished, and when the change is effected, the new and correct life must be just as voluntary and free as was the old life of sin. In short, the saved man

must do *right* from choice, just as freely as the unsaved man did *wrong* from choice.

I. With these considerations before us, we are in some measure prepared to understand the great importance of repentance.

1. It is not an act that God has enjoined arbitrarily, although, if this were the case, its importance could not be overestimated. It is well for us to know that when God commands, then there is, or should be, an end of all controversy. Only one thing is proper in such a case, and that is obedience. But when God's command is based on a necessary and discoverable law of our being, the reason for obedience is, if possible, even stronger. This is the case with repentance. It is a means to an end. It is related to its consequents as cause to effect. It is commanded because it is demanded. It is adapted in its nature to produce a certain definite effect. Just as faith in Jesus Christ, a being of infinite purity, is the divinely-appointed means for changing or purifying the heart, so repentance is God's appointed means for changing the life of outward action. It is divinely appointed because necessary. It is, therefore, both logical and psychological.

2. It consequently follows that repentance is not something that can be placed here and there, first one place and then another, and, consequently, at no place in particular. It is an antecedent and also a consequent. Since it is God's means of changing or purifying life, it must precede the changed life. But, logically, action has its mainspring within. It must come out of the heart. Actions or professions that do not come out of the heart are hypocritical. Therefore the changed life must be preceded by the changed heart, and since repentance is necessary to produce the changed life, it must come in between the changed heart and changed life. But we have seen that faith is the antecedent of a changed heart, therefore



repentance must follow faith and precede a changed life. This is both the logical and psychological order, and we shall presently see that it is the Scriptural order, and that it has another antecedent besides faith.

3. We are now prepared to see why God "commands all men everywhere to repent"; why it is said, "Unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish"; why, "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no forgiveness." It is because repentance is the divinely appointed and necessary means of changing life.

II. Understanding its purpose and place in the system of salvation, we are now prepared to grasp its meaning.

1. The distinction between faith and repentance is necessary and should be clearly apprehended. There is a sense, as we have seen in the previous chapter, in which faith includes the whole plan of salvation. Not only its facts, but its commands and its promises. Repentance is necessarily embraced in this. Paul "preached the faith which once he destroyed." Of course, his preaching included repentance. In a narrow and specific sense, however, faith is very different from repentance. As a term, it represents a very different psychological process or act. In its specific sense, it is expressive rather of rest than of action. True, it must be followed by action. It must lead to action; but faith, in its narrow specific sense, is not action. It is trust or confidence. Between faith and action, there is another psychological act or process that serves as the connecting link between the two, but necessarily distinct from both.

2. It must not be confounded with sorrow. Paul affirms that "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." Again he says: "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance."

Here, then, we see that repentance has another antecedent besides faith, or, to say the least, it may have. It is perfectly clear that the sacred writer in these passages clearly discriminates between sorrow and repentance, making the former the cause of the latter.

3. It is also something distinct from reformation. In Matt. iii. 8 we read the following language uttered by John the Baptist: "Bring forth, therefore, fruit worthy of repentance." This fruit can refer to nothing else than the external life of action. In other words, it is reformation. The passage evidently means: "Produce a reformation of life worthy of your repentance." Peter, in the sermon which he preached on the porch of the temple, which we find recorded in the third chapter of Acts, said: "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out." This evidently means to turn to God in some act or acts of obedience. In both these passages we see that the consequent of repentance is action or reformation.

4. Having thus clearly pointed out to us the antecedents and consequents of repentance, we are enabled to definitely determine exactly what is meant by the term. The items evidently stand in the following order: (1) We first have "faith" which comes by hearing, and without which it is impossible to please God. This we have found to be fundamental on the human side. (2) Next comes sorrow. How entirely logical is this. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, we accept his teaching concerning sin and righteousness. In the light of his teaching and life, we are led to hate sin and love righteousness. The first result of such a faith as this is to produce sorrow for sin. (3) Next comes repentance. (4) This is followed by a turning to God. (5) This turning is followed by a reformed life, or works worthy of repentance. What can be the meaning of repentance in the light of these facts? Evidently but one thing, and that is a change of mind

or purpose. We believe on Jesus, the infinitely pure and holy One. This produces as its fruit sorrow for sin. This leads us to change our mind or purpose, and determine to give up a life of sin and lead a life of holiness, modeled after the life of Him in whom we have believed. This is called repentance, and it is followed by a turning to God in overt act, which is but carrying out of the resolution involved in repentance, and this results in fruits, or a reformed life. This must, of necessity, be the order of things. Any other order disregards the necessary sequence of belief, feeling, resolution, action.

Two things, however, should be clearly noted at this point: (1) A man may have sorrow for sin who never repents. While repentance must follow sorrow, yet the process may be arrested before the repentance or change of mind is reached. A drunkard may be sorry for his life of sin, and yet never repent or change his mind with respect to his life of dissipation. (2) There may, in a certain way, be a reformation, so far as outward acts are concerned, when there has been no repentance. Circumstances may lead a man to change his actions when there has been no true change of mind with respect to the sinful life. The actions outwardly may be changed from expediency, or from some other motive, when there has been no sorrow for sin leading to a change of mind respecting it, and no real turning to God.

5. The meaning of the original word harmonizes perfectly with this view. The Greek word translated "repentance," is "*Metanoia*." The verb form is "*Metanoeo*." This is a compound word made up of the preposition, "*Meta*," which means, "after" or "next," and "*Noeo*," "to perceive." "*Metanoeo*," therefore, literally means "to perceive afterward," or to come to conviction afterward, or after reflection, and hence it means to change one's mind or purpose, an afterthought, or a change of mind after reflection. This is the meaning we discovered it must have as determined by its

antecedents and consequents. We hence see that the meaning of the word, as determined by its etymology, exactly fits the place that the Scripture gives to it. It is change of mind, and this is produced by sorrow for sin, and sorrow for sin results from faith. It is properly followed by some act indicative of the change of mind, and the result is, changed life, or "fruits worthy of repentance."

The logical simplicity harmonizing with the psychological necessity, invests the Scriptural presentation with a most charming attractiveness.

6. This explanation is in perfect accord with the Scripture examples of repentance.

(a) In Matthew xii. 41, we have these words of Christ recorded: "The men of Nineveh shall stand up in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, for they repented [*"Metanoesan"*] at the preaching of Jonah, and behold a greater than Jonah is here." The history of the case will enable us to determine just what the Ninevites did which Christ designated by the phrase, "They repented."

(1) They were an exceedingly wicked people, and God sent Jonah to them to say, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall surely be destroyed."

(2) Jonah tried to run away from the work that God appointed him to do, but after his remarkable experience, he fulfilled his commission by declaring God's message to the Ninevites.

(3) The Ninevites believed what Jonah preached. Their faith came by hearing Jonah's message.

(4) The record says (Jonah iii. 5): "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast and put on the sack-cloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." Even the king covered himself with sack-cloth and sat in ashes. He proclaimed a fast both for man and beast.

(5) This resulted in change of mind or purpose in the king and people concerning the life they had been living. The king said (Jonah iii. 8): "But let man and beast be covered with sack-cloth, and cry mightily unto God; yea, let them turn every one from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands." The people did this, for in verse ten we read: "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way." Here the repentance was the change of purpose resulting from sorrow produced by the faith begotten by Jonah's preaching, and it led to a changed life.

(b) In the parable of the "Prodigal Son" we have a clear case of repentance outlined by Christ. The story is familiar, and need not be repeated in detail. The points essential to this discussion are as follows:

(1) The younger son left the father's house, taking with him his portion of goods. By a riotous course of life he came to destitution and want.

(2) This experience brought him to sorrow over his past course of life. He thought of his destitution and of his father's goodness and abundance.

(3) He changed his mind with respect to his course of life. He determined to break away from his evil surroundings and to go back to his father. Here was repentance ("*Metanoia*").

(4) He arose and returned to his father.

In this example we begin with faith. The boy, however, abandoned his faith in his father. He left him for a life of sin. His *experience* was the preacher that revived his faith. This was followed by sorrow, this by change of mind, and this by an overt act resulting in a new and changed life.

Then, as a definition of repentance, we may say: "It is a change of mind, consisting of a determination to forsake a sinful life and lead a life of righteousness." Its antecedents are, faith and Jesus Christ, resulting in sorrow for sin. Its consequents are, a turning away from sin, followed by a life of righteousness.

It may be well for us to remember that repentance is a very broad term in its application, when used as a condition of salvation. True, there may be an act of repentance for every specific sinful act. A man may tell a falsehood, feel sorry for it, and determine to do so no more. This is repentance; but repentance in its broad sense is not a renunciation of one or more particular sins—that is, of some definite number of sins—but a renouncing of sin. It is a determination to abandon the course of sin, which involves a forsaking of all grades and classes of sins. It, consequently, determines, not some particular action, but a whole course of life, which involves a change of the governing principle. It is, therefore, a matter of supreme significance. It is a grand and mighty act in which angels may well feel interested. It will be followed by many a fierce battle to overcome this bad habit, or that particular sin, but when the firm resolution has been made, inspired by faith, and prompted by sorrow for and hatred of sin, by the grace of God the victory can be won.

The question has sometimes been raised as to whether faith can, in any sense, come after repentance. I unhesitatingly answer, Yes. Faith, in the sense of trust, is a growth. It has measures or degrees. It may be weak or strong. Now, while faith, both psychologically and Scripturally, comes before repentance in its first stages or beginnings, in its advanced stages it may follow repentance. That is, it may increase after repentance. In fact, it will necessarily increase. In the sense of larger, stronger faith, it may come after repentance, and repentance in turn may be followed by faith—greater, grander, nobler faith.

**III. We are led to consider in the next place, the hindrances to repentance.**

**I. Bearing in mind that repentance is a radical change of mind, induced by sorrow for sin, which is produced by faith in**

Christ, and leading to a new life, we must at once see that the natural pride of the heart hinders repentance. Man seems to be naturally a proud being, although a calm, impartial view reveals little ground for such feeling. True, in one sense, we may justly have a feeling of pride. When we consider our origin, children of the King; our possibilities, capable of great growth; our destiny, an endless existence of bliss in the society of God and unfallen spirits, we may reasonably experience a feeling of self-esteem. This, however, is not pride in a bad or foolish sense. From the standpoint of actual condition, we have little reason for pride. An introspective view will reveal to each more or less of sinful tendency; more or less of groveling propensity; more or less of actual guilt; more or less of narrowness or bigotry; more or less of prejudice; more or less of subordination of the superior to the inferior in our nature, and it will reveal a great deal of ignorance in even the wisest. All this should cause a feeling of deep humility rather than pride. But notwithstanding this, man is not simply proud in the good sense referred to above—this is a feeling to be commended rather than condemned—but he is vain in the bad or foolish sense. We have a silly vanity that prompts us often to cling to things that are wrong, and which we feel to be wrong, simply because a change is humiliating. It requires no small amount of moral heroism to turn around and take the back track. It may subject us to censure and ridicule. Our friends may laugh at us and our enemies may cast upon us obloquy and reproach. Some never repent because they can not face all this. They are too vain. Humility is truly a priceless jewel. The necessity for this cardinal virtue is shown from the language of Christ: "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal them unto babes." The

philosophy of such language is apparent when we consider that humility is necessary to true repentance, and that it is the necessary condition of receiving great truth.

2. Next may be mentioned, as a hindrance to repentance, the feeling of self-sufficiency. Perhaps our vanity often leads us to trust in ourselves. Certainly very many seem to have great confidence in their own strength and resources. This is all the more strange because most of us have been cheated so many times. Repeated failures ought to teach us the lesson of dependence, yet, unfortunately, it does not do it. Men who are conscious of sin and, consequently, of the need of reform, are prone to rely solely on themselves. They feel no need of repentance toward God. There is no sadder picture than to see a weak mortal going out into the arena of life to fight its awful battles alone. Jesus saw this tendency in man, and knew the danger involved when he said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

3. The influence of carnal, corrupt desires is another great hindrance to repentance. The necessary consequence of repentance, involving the giving up of sensual gratifications, appetites, sordid pleasures, lust, gross forms of sin, all must be subdued or given up. Here is a surrender many can not make. The drunkard may weep over his sin, yet his burning appetite keeps him from the deliberate purpose to abandon his habits of dissipation. Sorrow suggests repentance, but appetite makes a powerful counter appeal, and the man hesitates and is lost.

4. The deceptive appearances of sin often prevent repentance. The wrong life appears so pleasant, so charming, and so harmless. The hideous deformity is disguised under a fair exterior. The foul, hideous sepulcher, full of corruption and noisome vapors, is fair on the outside. The bitter pill is sugar-coated; the precipice is concealed by the hedge of roses. The noise of the engulfing torrent is drowned by sweet strains of



music. Why resolve to turn away from things so pleasant? Many have allowed themselves to drift onward, lulled into a fatal repose by the siren of sin, until, alas, the opportunity for repentance is gone.

5. The last hindrance that we will specify is that of procrastination. This is the thief that robs us every day of that which is more valuable than money. It steals our time and our opportunities, neither of which can ever be recovered by any possible means. Many come to the end of life impenitent, not because they have deliberately chosen it so, but because they put off their repentance till a more convenient season. No man is true to himself who defers the choice for righteousness for a single hour. Loyalty to the highest interests of the soul demands instant choice followed by immediate action.

#### **IV. Last of all, the motives to repentance demand our notice.**

1. The apostle Paul declares that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance. This is certainly a motive sufficiently strong to induce every one to turn away in the purpose of his life from a course of sin. Gratitude to Him who clothes us, feeds us, pours out upon us the richest gifts in the most abundant measure, provides for our every want—physical, intellectual, and spiritual—should lead every man to repentance. No well-disposed child can go against the wishes of a kind, wise, and loving earthly parent. To do so is felt to be the basest ingratitude. To refuse obedience to such a parent, is to incur the censure of all right-minded people and the condemnation of an enlightened conscience. Our heavenly Father, the kindest of parents, commands us to repent. What greater motive could we have than this? Well may Paul say that the goodness of God leads us to repentance. Truly it leads many, and it ought to lead all.

2. The abiding interest and the deep anxiety that the inhabitants of heaven feel toward the impenitent should act as a strong incentive. "There is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons that need no forgiveness." This is a wonderful, a startling fact. It shows us the immense importance of repentance. Eternal consequences are suspended upon it. It shows us also the wonderful philanthropy of the inhabitants of the heavenly world, and admonishes us to manifest a proper regard for ourselves by turning in purpose from sin and ruin to righteousness and true holiness, and thus become worthy of the inheritance of the saints in light. The fact that repentance causes joy in heaven, should, therefore, operate as a powerful motive to lead men to repentance.

3. The degrading and deadly character of a life of sin should operate as an all-sufficient motive to cause men to repent. Every day that men give to a life of sin is sinking them deeper in moral degradation, and causing more of moral deformity. Every hour thus spent is taking the soul farther away from God and from fellowship with pure and good. It is corrupting more and more the fountains of physical, intellectual, and spiritual life; it is vitiating the taste, beclouding the judgment, weakening the moral perceptions, paralyzing the higher faculties, and bringing into subjection the nobler impulses. There is a moral gravitation continually downward that hurries the soul onward to its ruin with an ever-increasing momentum. Sin has never given one cup of happiness in which there was not dregs of bitterness; it has never offered a rose on which there was not a sharp thorn. It takes the health out of the limbs, vigor and elasticity out of the constitution, brightness out of the eyes, color out of the cheek, hope out of the heart, buoyancy out of the spirit, and aspiration out of the soul.

A life of sin is a desert without an oasis, a winter without a summer, a night without a morning. That so many are being

borne onward to destruction, never suspecting the terrible danger to which they are exposed, should serve to warn all men of the terrible effects of sin. It should serve as a bugle blast to call men everywhere to repentance.

4. As a final motive to repentance, it should never be forgotten that the righteous judgment of God must and will cast off forever the finally impenitent. To go out alone away from home, from friends, from kindred spirits, is a gloomy, desolate thought; but to go out in the day of eternity, away from the good, the pure, the noble, away from God, from happiness, from peace, who can endure the awful thought?

Ought not the sentence of eternal banishment pronounced against the sinner by God, and necessarily written in the constitution of the moral world, admonish the sinner to repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CONFESSION.

**Introduction:** The religion of Christ has a two-fold bearing,—

1. It has to do first of all with the individual. It is a personal possession; a matter between the soul and God. In fact, the word religion, in its etymological meaning, indicates this. "*Religio*" is a binding again or binding back—a uniting of the broken connection between man and God. This binding back is accomplished through Christ, who is God manifest in the flesh. It is complete and entire submission to Him to whom all authority has been given. This view of the case requires each one to separate himself from all the world and stand alone before God, and submit to the Divine requirements as if there were not another soul on earth. This is a work no one can perform for another. Father can not perform this for son, nor son for father; mother for daughter, nor daughter for mother; husband for wife, nor wife for husband. Each one stands or falls for himself. Neither will the failure of any one to discharge this obligation serve as an excuse for another. On the contrary, thereby the obligation of the other seems rather to be increased. The husband may deny his duty to Christ, or neglect it; the obligation of the wife is in no way diminished, but is rather increased. The child may refuse to submit; the parents' obligation is, if possible, greater than it otherwise would be. Isaiah recognized this principle when he said: "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." He felt other's sins were no excuse

for him, but, on the contrary, that his own obligations were, on that account, increased. Let this fact, then, be constantly kept in mind, that the personal aspect of the religion of Christ is of the first and highest importance.

2. By the side of this truth must be placed another that is of very great importance. It must ever be remembered that it is not in accordance with the spirit of Christ's religion that its influence should exhaust itself on the individual's own heart and life. Although it is intended first for self, it is not intended to be confined to self. In fact, by its very nature, it can not be confined. It rebels at any such narrow limits as a single heart. The man who can confine his religion to himself has not the religion of Christ in any large measure. True religion is social in its nature. It works from within outwardly, and, consequently, seeks for an ever-increasing circle of power. The moment it occupies the individual heart it struggles for utterance. It arms itself for conquest, and goes forth to the battle. The wife wants the husband saved, and the husband the wife; the parent the child, and the child the parent. Nay, you can not circumscribe this impulse by family, national, or race lines. It can never rest as long as there is a single soul that has not submitted to the authority of the King.

If the religion of Christ had to do solely with the individual heart, an outward, open, verbal confession might not be so necessary, but, inasmuch as it can not, in the very nature of the case, be thus confined, an open, verbal confession is not only exceedingly appropriate, but absolutely essential. Secret discipleship is a delusion. Christ recognizes no such relationship. He demands an open avowal.

We are led, then, to inquire,—

#### **I. What constitutes a necessary and proper confession of faith.**

Of course, all agree that the confession be an expression of the faith that is in the heart, and we have seen that faith,

subjectively considered, is confidence or trust in Jesus as a personal; living Saviour. The question, however, remains, What constitutes an adequate comprehensive confession—one that is exhaustive and free from ambiguity? Is there a definite and invariable expression of truth that will always and everywhere clearly and fully express this faith, or is each person left to himself to give expression to the faith of his heart in such form of words as may seem to him fitting and proper?

A study of the New Testament Scriptures reveals a confession that is a clear, concise, unambiguous, adequate expression of the faith of the soul, both in its subjective and objective aspects. It is so perfect that we can add nothing to it or make it more comprehensive, nor can we take anything from it without marring its beauty and destroying its completeness. This confession is not the product of the human mind, but it is rather the embodiment of the Divine wisdom in a statement that adequately and properly expresses the necessary human faith, both as a subjective possession and as an objective reality.

1. We receive this Divine statement or confession from God the Father.

On two occasions mentioned in the New Testament, God bore witness to Christ in a very pointed and specific manner.

(1) When Jesus was about to enter on his public ministry, he came to John to be baptized of him in Jordan. After his baptism, as he came up from the water, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended in the bodily form like a dove, and lighted upon him, and a voice came from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

(2) On the mountain of transfiguration, Jesus was robed in his heavenly glory, and his face became as resplendent as the sun. Peter, James, and John were witnesses from earth, and

Moses and Elias were present as representatives from the heavenly world. Again the voice came from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." Here not only his personality, but his authoritative work as teacher and law-giver is declared.

2. We receive this confession from Christ himself.

Christ repeatedly asserted, while here on earth, that he was the Son of God, both in the direct language and in words implying that fact. "I and my Father are one." "I came not down from heaven to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you." "I am come in my Father's name." "Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world was." "I proceeded forth and came from God." "Art thou then the Son of God? and he said unto them, Ye say that I am." This is the language of Christ when on trial for his life. The marginal reading translates the passage, "Ye say it because I am." It is an idiomatic form of affirmation. In selecting quotations embodying this great truth, we are embarrassed by the multitude of the passages that crowd upon us.

This fact of Sonship, declared by God, and asserted by Christ, necessarily carries with it all the claims of Christ in his three-fold relation to humanity as Prophet, Priest, and King. To confess the truth, is to give a proper and adequate expression to the faith that is in his heart. This embraces all that need be or can be said.

3. We also learn what constitutes the confession from statements made while Christ was upon earth, and by men upon which he placed the seal of his approval.

(1) When Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Attention has already been directed to this confession in the chapter on the "Foundation." We there saw that Christ declared that the great

truth confessed by Peter had been revealed to him by the Father in heaven. It is, therefore, a divinely-inspired statement, and not the product of human wisdom.

(2) We also learn that this confession was being made by others, in studying the account of the miracle wrought by Christ on the blind man, and we infer that it was becoming quite common. When the parents of the blind man were questioned as to how or by whom their son had been cured, they gave evasive answers, because it is said, "They feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already that if any man should confess him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John ix. 22). Thus it seems that to confess Jesus was to confess that he was the Christ, or, in other words, that he was the anointed of God. Doubtless some, perhaps many, were making this confession, or the Jews would not have agreed among themselves to cast any out of the synagogue who should make it.

Jesus sealed this confession of him by his own special sanction. When Peter made it, Christ pronounced a blessing upon him for doing so. He also said on another occasion, "Everyone therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew x. 32). "And I say unto you, every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God" (Luke xii. 8). The confession therefore involved a declaration concerning the personality of Christ. It was the confession of him as a Divine Person, and not simply a statement of something about him. This carried with it, all that Jesus was or claimed to be.

4. We also learn what the confession was from the apostles after Christ had ascended to heaven.

(1) John says, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God" (I. John iv. 15). Also, "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that



believeth that Jesus is the Son of God" (I. John v. 5). This falls into beautiful harmony with the words of God and of Christ. God said, "This is my beloved Son." Jesus declared himself to be the Son of God, and also blessed Peter for declaring it. John says the thing to be believed in order to overcome the world is, that "Jesus is the Son of God," and he also declares this is the thing to be confessed in order that God may dwell in us. Of course, this faith is personal in its object, as we have learned from other scriptures, and it involves not simply an intellectual assent to a proposition, but a personal trust.

(2) Paul says to Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life whereunto thou wast called and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses" (I. Timothy vi. 12). Jesus had said, "Everyone who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven." Timothy made the "good confession" before many witnesses, and Paul says it was unto eternal life. It therefore follows that this "good confession" was the confession of Christ. We also reach this same conclusion from a study of the next verse. Paul there uses the phrase, "good confession," again, and applies it to the confession that Jesus made before Pontius Pilate, which was doubtless a declaration of the fact that he was the Son of God, for when he was on the cross his enemies said: "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross"; also, "He that trusteth on God; let him deliver him now if he desireth him, for he said, I am the Son of God." This had, doubtless, just been said in his trial before Pilate. According to Luke, he confessed this fact during his trial, when the Jews said, "Art thou the Son of God?" He certainly said it in substance on many other occasions.

5. Church historians bear abundant testimony as to what the confession consisted of in the primitive church.

(1) Neander says: "At the beginning, when it was important that the church should rapidly extend itself, those who confessed their belief in Jesus as the Messiah among the Jews, or their belief in one God and in Jesus as the Messiah among the Gentiles, were immediately baptized."

(2) Dr. Robinson says: "Among primitive Christians there was a uniform belief that Jesus was the Christ, and a perfect harmony of affection. . . . These churches were all composed of reputed believers, who had been baptized by immersion, on profession of their faith."

(3) Mosheim says: "Whoever acknowledged Christ as the Saviour of mankind, and made a solemn profession of his confidence in him, was immediately baptized and received into the church."

Other testimonials of similar import might be introduced, but it is unnecessary. We will get additional Scripture testimony as to what constitutes a proper confession, by considering,—

## II. How and when the confession should be made.

There is an every-day confession of Christ that every Christian man is under obligation to make by his daily walk and conversation. It is incumbent upon Christians to so live that all men may know them to be followers of Jesus. However, this informal and ever-recurring confession, although very important, is not that to which we refer in this discussion. There is a formal, pointed, definite, necessary, and fitting confession, as we have just seen, and both the manner and time of making it may be clearly determined.

1. According to apostolic teaching it is a verbal confession. It is to be made with the mouth.

(1) Paul says: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man

believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans x. 9, 10). This is something different from the every-day confession of Christian life. It is not a confession of deeds or actions, such as one makes by coming into the church or visiting the sick. It logically goes before all this. It is a formal and open avowal before the world in express words of the faith that is in the heart.

(2) God has determined that every one shall formally make this confession, either gladly and willingly, as the full and free expression of the heart's confidence, or unwillingly and by compulsion. "Wherefore also God highly exalted him and gave unto him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11). "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. xiv. 11). Surely this is a most reasonable requirement.

2. There is also a time when this should be done, that it may be clearly ascertained from apostolic teaching.

(1) We learn in the quotation from Romans above, that confession is made unto salvation. The same fact may be inferred from the language quoted from John. Jesus, in giving the commission, said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." On Pentecost, when the convicted ones cried out, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent ye and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Ananias said to the penitent Saul, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his [the Lord's] name." Two points are established by the foregoing quotations: First, the baptized believer is said to be saved. We gather this from the words of Jesus in the commission, and also

from the language of Peter and Ananias. Second, confession comes before salvation. It follows, therefore, that confession comes before baptism, since there is no period between baptism and salvation in which to make the confession. Again, Paul says: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." In other words, confession comes after faith and before baptism. There is something beautifully consistent in this order. The process is an exceedingly logical one. It meets the demand of reason and common sense. A genuine confession presupposes faith. It could not be made without faith. The mouth confesses what the heart believes. It certainly should be made before baptism, since that is the act on man's part that culminates in salvation or pardon, and brings him to the enjoyment of God's promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and unto the new covenant relation. Here, as everywhere, reason and the Bible are perfectly harmonious.

**III. We are led next to consider the characteristics of this confession and what is involved in it. Its supreme importance will thus become manifest.**

I. It is very simple. It is an expression of faith or confidence in a Divine person, and not a subtle and metaphysical explanation of Divine mysteries. It declares a certain truth as the basis of faith, but makes no attempt to explain the mystery connected with the truth. It deals with the *what*, and not with the *how*. A child can accept the former; the proudest philosopher may be unable to explain the mysteries connected with the latter. The Divine goodness and wisdom is nowhere more apparent than in making salvation dependent on faith in a person in a capacity and relation sustained by clear and explicit testimony, rather than upon abstruse and elaborate systems of theology. Jesus doubtless had this very point in mind when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of

heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal them unto babes." In view of this statement from Christ, may we not expect a very simple confession of faith; or, rather, is not a simple confession a most natural and reasonable thing? Yet, strange to say, the objection is frequently heard that this confession is too simple. How often when it is made, do we hear the objector say, "Any one can say that." This is certainly true. Any one who believes it can say it, and in this the wisdom of God shines out. God has made both the faith and the expression of it so simple that it comes within the radius of every one's powers. It comes down to the lowest level, and by this means the blessing of salvation is "scattered beside all waters."

As a matter of fact, this objection grows out of misconception. It results from confounding the simple faith in Christ with theological dogmas. Theology is very valuable in its way, and by no means to be despised, but it should ever be kept in mind that theology is not necessarily Christianity. It is possible to be a great theologian and not a Christian, and, on the contrary, to be a good Christian and not a theologian. The aim of the gospel is to make men Christians; and the confession is intended as an expression of that faith which is essential to Christian character and life, and not the faith that is essential to, or constitutes, formal or systematic theology. This world must and will be saved by Christ and not by doctrinal systems.

2. This confession is very comprehensive.

We have already seen that man's need is threefold, and that it has always been met and necessarily must be met in the three offices of prophet, priest, and king. We have farther seen that these three offices are centered in Jesus, and, as the divine Son of God, he fills these offices perfectly and completely. There is no impotence or weakness discoverable

anywhere. This confession, therefore, acknowledges Jesus as standing in his threefold relation to the soul. It expresses a trust in him as the complete satisfaction of all human need. If it be true, as it is, that any one can make this confession, it is equally true that no one can say more than this. The most comprehensive proposition ever formulated by human wisdom pales into insignificance when placed beside this divinely given and clearly formulated truth. It presents the appearance of a tallow candle in the presence of the noonday sun. It is well worthy of the divine origin claimed for it, so simple yet so profound, so small and yet so great.

It furnishes sufficient basis for the salvation of the world. In it are centered all the hopes of mortals that pertain to the life that now is and that reaches beyond the grave. It underlies the whole scheme of redemption. If Jesus be not the Son of God, he was a gross impostor, and, consequently, no one is under any obligation to obey him. Deny the proposition that Jesus is the Son of God, and you sweep from under him the very ground of his authority. On the other hand, if Jesus was the Son of God, he speaks with the authority of God, and no one can refuse to hear and obey, except at his own peril. To accept this truth is to place the soul under highest obligations of obedience, therefore Jesus promises to confess those who confess him.

3. This confession places Jesus at the climatic point in the soul's salvation. An analysis of man leads us to consider a sublime culmination, not only in the history of the race, but potentially in the history of every individual, in which Jesus becomes the central figure and the efficient agent for the accomplishment of highest good to the soul.

(1) Man has a most wonderful physical organism, and yet it is possible to conceive of a being with a body as perfect as that of man, and yet lacking in those intellectual and spiritual qualities that give to man his wonderful preëminence. In

fact, such a creature can scarcely be regarded as hypothetical, since we find it almost completely realized in certain species of the ape family. Such a creature, even though it approach man ever so closely in its physical organism, yet drops below the human plane by a distance that is apparently infinite.

(2) We can conceive of such a creature, endowed with the purely intellectual qualities, as distinguished from the moral or spiritual, and hence lacking the power of making moral distinctions. Such a being would truly be wonderful, but, although provided with a body as perfect as that of man, and endowed with the purely intellectual faculties, the power to think, reason, and will, it would not rise to the level of man. Far from it. The drop below the human plane would be most infinite. Such a creature would lack that which gives to man his very crown of glory, which is the power to make moral distinctions; the power to decide between good and evil. The terms "right and wrong" could not be applied to the acts of this hypothetical being any more than to the actions of one of the lower order of animals. When Adam came forth from the plastic hand of his Creator, possessing his wonderful body, wonderful intellectual powers, and still more wonderful endowments, no wonder he stood at the climatic point of creation, and was declared to have been made in the image of God. The question, however, is suggested by this hypothetical history, as to whether Adam represents the ultimate end in God's plan and purpose. Has the highest point been reached? Does this being represent the Divine purpose in its full realization? Judging from the history of the case, we must say, No. With the power to know right and wrong; with the two clearly presented; with the power of choice and the will to do, man chose the wrong instead of the right. Is this the outcome of the Divine purpose? Is God's work to end in a defaced image of himself? Is all the upward current of progress, discoverable in creation, to be suddenly turned back upon itself, and

the work of æons to end in disgraceful failure? Reason rebels at the thought. Surely he who saw the end from the beginning, looked beyond this creature Adam, wonderful as he was, to a product of the divine workmanship that would reflect glory unto the divine Architect. Just here the Book of Revelation comes to our assistance with its unfolding plan of infinite wisdom, love, and grace.

The expectancy created by the apparently sad issue of the test imposed on Adam, is met by the farther revelation of the divine purpose, showing its realization in the human married to the divine. As God married the physical to the intellectual, and both to the spiritual, he moves forward to the realization of his divine purpose in a marriage of this threefold being to the divine. This great purpose is realized in Christ. Jesus is God on the human plain, tenderly wooing man to himself as a lover woos his bride. Married to the divine is to be married to Christ, and as the husband and bride are one, so Christ and the Christian are one. Hence, in Jesus Christ "we are made partakers of the divine nature," and thus reach that high plain of exaltation and blessedness in which the divine purpose concerning man is realized. It therefore follows that the confession of faith in Jesus exalts him to the supreme position of honor, glory, and power as the Sovereign of the soul, the King of humanity, and the Bridegroom of the church. No other wedding will ever be needed, because in Christ Jesus man is made a new creature, and lifted up to the divine plain, where God and the unfallen spirits dwell. The divine process, slow though it may have been, and apparently interrupted by the sad circumstance of sin, is vindicated, and the divine wisdom demonstrated, in man redeemed from the thralldom of moral evil, incident to his inferior, baser condition, and exalted to celestial heights of virtue, thus becoming a citizen of the everlasting kingdom, prepared for him "from the foundation of the world."



**IV. We are led finally to consider a few of the many reasons that exist for making an open verbal confession of Christ.**

1. Because it is logically demanded as the first outward expression of the faith that is in the heart and of the repentance that leads to a changed life. Faith and repentance are inward matters, but they can not be shut up and confined to the heart. The inward faith must find some outward expression, or it will perish. The changed purpose must manifest itself in some overt act, or it will die. The first and most natural form of expression for the inward faith and repentance, is an open avowal of the faith that led to the repentance. If the soul has believed and repented, it is the duty of the mouth to speak it. This act is necessary to confirm both the faith and repentance. It is the logical beginning of all that is external in Christian duty and life. Our Christianity leads us to make demands on others, and it places us in certain peculiar and necessary relations to others. In the ordinance of Christian baptism we require the service of another in order to its proper administration. Baptism is meaningless and worthless except as an act of faith. No one has any authority to administer it except to a believer. Therefore, we owe it to the administrator to confess our faith, as a justification for the service that we require of him. No one ought ever to administer baptism except upon a profession of faith, if he would be loyal to the command of Jesus. Moreover, this baptism brings us into new relations, not only to God, but also to men. The Christian brotherhood is based upon a common Christian faith, and, consequently, every one entering this fraternal relation owes it to his brethren to confess the faith, which is the common bond of union. We are, therefore, said to be children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

2. We owe it to the Bridegroom, to whom we are united in the strongest bonds of faith and love. He is our best and truest friend. Though all other friends should desert us, yet

will he remain faithful and true, "for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Nor is this an empty boast on his part. We may have the utmost confidence in this promise, from the fact that he has never left us. When, as a race, we were overwhelmed in the ruin wrought by sin, he did not leave us to a hopeless destiny of misery and woe, but turned away from the delights, enjoyments, and blissful associations of heaven, and the glory he had with the Father, and accepted an earthly life of humility and suffering, that he might redeem us to God. He did not turn away from our sad and wretched condition, but "he knew our griefs and carried our sorrows," and even tasted death, although coming in its most ignominious form, and all freely, voluntarily, and for our sakes. Common gratitude, to say nothing of love, should compel every man to confess this Saviour before men. Nor is this all. From the very beginning of his work the powers of darkness have been marshalled against him and his work. He is hated and opposed by every wicked and diabolical spirit in the universe. Every possible agency of evil is invoked to destroy his work. All the machinations of hell—misrepresentation, falsehood, slander, ridicule, persecution, and every evil and diabolical thing that cunning and wicked spirits can devise—are called into service to overthrow his kingdom of righteousness. The battle seems to wax fiercer as the ages advance, and the highest interests of the soul are involved in the issue. Every noble, patriotic, philanthropic impulse demands a fearless, open confession of Him who is the Captain of our salvation. To refuse is to be guilty of both cowardice and base ingratitude.

The baseness of a refusal to confess Christ is magnified as the ages advance. The fairest products of our civilization have grown from the seed of Christianity. Christ is shown to be the Author of all that is sweetest and most blessed in the life of the world to-day. The Christian home—God's paradise on

earth; the purest and most beneficent forms of government; the value and stability of material possessions; the fairest products of art and the noblest forms of literature; the choicest expressions of human philanthropy—colleges, missionary societies, hospitals, asylums, in short, eleemosynary institutions of every kind; free schools and free institutions of every character and grade; all organized efforts to redeem the world from ignorance, superstition and sin—all this, and infinitely more, is due to Christ, the world's Hope and the world's Redeemer.

"Ashamed of Jesus, just as soon  
Let morning be ashamed of noon.  
No, when I blush be this my shame,  
That I no more revere his name."

3. Every man owes it to the kingdom of God on earth to openly and publicly confess its King.

The church is God's organized agency for the lifting up of the world from its degraded moral condition. As an organization, it was built by Christ and founded upon himself, and that which is essential to its very existence is the divinity of its Founder. It is, consequently, eminently fitting and proper to require every one who seeks membership in this organization to make a formal declaration of his adherence to that which is fundamental and vital to the institution. No one has any right to membership in the Church of Christ who does not accept the divinity of Christ, the foundation, and no one should ever be permitted to enter it without formal assent to the proposition embodying that fact.

4. No man can pay the debt he justly owes his fellow man and refuse to openly confess Christ.

In him is wrapped up the highest good of every individual, as well as the destiny of the race. Through the principles he has enunciated will come the overthrow of all social evils and the righting of all wrongs. In the road that he has pointed out, the human race must ever march onward and upward to

the achievement of its highest destiny and realization of its greatest happiness. God's promises are all yea and amen in Jesus Christ. To refuse to confess Christ before the world is, therefore, to withhold from men, so far as we can, that which is essential to their highest good, both here and hereafter. No man can be true to the highest interests of his fellow man and remain a mere passive spectator in a contest in which the destiny of the race is involved. In the presence of such an issue he must both speak and act, if he have the heart of a true man; and the words that have more meaning and power in deciding this issue than any words the lips can speak are the words that confess the heart's belief in the divinity of Christ. This at once places the individual on the side of God and humanity, and in active opposition to sin and wickedness.

5. Finally, every man owes it to himself to confess the name of Jesus. The battle against sin is not fancy, a mere creation of the imagination. It is a terrible reality. The ruin and desolation wrought by sin is seen on every hand, nor are these evidences wholly external. No one can look within the chamber of his own soul and fail to discover the presence and the awful effects of the destroyer, sin. The contest within is often fiercer than the battle without. Even the sainted Paul, in the midst of the battle that he waged outwardly against sin, spoke of this inward struggle, and he seemed to live in daily apprehension as to the issue of this double conflict. He had learned to know the weakness and treachery of the human heart and the consequent need of strength that is divine. In the face of this awful struggle, when Satan, sometimes by subtle and wily devices, at other times by almost irresistible assaults, seeks to overwhelm the soul in irretrievable ruin, it behooves every man to fortify himself by every means that God has provided in order to thwart the enemy in his diabolical designs. There is no way to intrench the soul more firmly in righteousness than by an open avowal that commits the individual to a

right line of action. When the crises come that try the soul, he who has committed himself to God in open confession before men has an immense advantage. Many a man, just for the want of this, has gone down in everlasting shame and ruin, while on the other hand, many an one, by reason of this open confession, has risen a triumphant conqueror over the forces of hell, and has been able to say with Paul: "Thanks be to God, that giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." In the presence of such facts as these, the language of the apostle already quoted takes on a new meaning: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Let every one, therefore, be admonished by the pleadings of God, by the invitations of Christ, by the wooing of the Holy Spirit, by the example of the apostles and martyrs, by his obligation to the church, by the gratitude he owes the Saviour, by the debt he owes the world, by the duty he owes himself, and let him without fear, without hesitation, and in the consciousness that he will never do a nobler thing, stand up before the world and declare, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

## CHAPTER IX.

### BAPTISM.

**Introduction :** 1. It is perhaps safe to say that there is no item of Christian faith or practice over which there has been more discussion than over the question of baptism; nor has any question excited more animosity and bitterness among religious people. For centuries it has been a source of division and strife among the professed followers of Christ. To-day the controversy still rages, and is characterized, if with less of bitterness, certainly not with less of earnestness. It has divided churches, neighborhoods, and families, and stands even now as the most formidable barrier to the organic union of evangelical religious bodies. There are, however, some hopeful signs that indicate that possibly we have reached the beginning of the end of this vexed question. The larger charity that characterizes Christian people in this day, growing out of the fuller and better understanding that Christian denominations are beginning to have of each other, is dissipating the bigotry and prejudice that has been such a hindrance to anything like fair discussion, and a calm and impartial judgment as to the merits of the arguments brought forward. The people love the right, and they do not love error; and when prejudice and bitter partisanship can be sufficiently abated to enable people to take an honest, candid view of any subject, they will see the right, and choose it, and they will reject the wrong.

2. What is wanted to-day in the settlement of the baptismal controversy is more of the spirit of Christ, more of that

charity that "thinketh no evil," and that "suffers long and is kind." We also need more of the disposition towards individual inquiry and judgment which investigates subjects and decides them on their merits, and less of the spirit of traditionalism, which accepts without question the doctrines and practices handed down from the past, and adheres to them with a sort of blind superstitious reverence. Happily the former spirit is growing. Religious thought is becoming larger and freer, religious investigation deeper and broader; and there is less disposition to blindly follow in the footsteps of the fathers without raising the question of why and wherefore. Religious people are more and more inclined to demand a reason for that which is imposed upon them, and they are also more ready to give an intelligent reason, not only for the hope within them, but for their outward religious practices.

3. We may consequently safely conclude, in the light of existing conditions, that on certain phases of the question, unity of judgment will be reached, and that very speedily. This is not only an age of investigation, but of broad scholarship, characterized by the deepest piety. Surely, then, some phases of this question ought to be clearly and definitely settled.

(1) We ought to answer in an unequivocal way what the word *baptizo* means as used by Christ and his apostles.

(2) We ought to be able to discover from the New Testament teaching, the importance that Christ and his apostles attach to this ordinance.

(3) We ought to ascertain the class of persons upon whom the ordinance was imposed.

(4) We ought to be able to learn positively the purpose of the institution.

(5) We ought to be able to know definitely what the antecedents and consequents are. All this ought to become apparent by a careful and critical study of the New Testament

Scriptures—such a study as the sanctified scholarship of the present day ought to be able to give to this important subject.

4. But if all this were accomplished, there are still other phases of the question upon which unanimity of sentiment will not so soon be reached.

(1) There arises the question of church authority—*i. e.*, the right of the church to depart from the apostolic custom, or change the apostolic form. The Roman Catholic Church boldly arrogates to itself this right, and it bases its practice of affusion on this ground. Authorities in the Church of England and other allied bodies, for the most part, take the same position.

(2) Then, too, many Protestant bodies hold that the ordinance is non-essential, which logically carries with it the assumption that the form is immaterial. These are not questions that can be settled by scholarship or a critical study of the New Testament text, but they are rather deductions reached by a process of reasoning, which may or may not be sound. They belong rather to the field of opinion than to the domain of faith, but they nevertheless have been so rigidly held that they, practically, have been made tests of fellowship, and consequently they serve to divide.

5. The possible grounds for agreement are not many, nor are they hard to discover.

(1) It is evident that if all would agree to accept the New Testament meaning of the Greek word (which we have no reason to suppose differs from the classical meaning), and to be governed by apostolic practice, controversy would soon come to an end. The advanced scholarship of the day, and the increasing light growing out of historic research and archaic investigation, would soon compel an agreement throughout the entire religious world; and here I venture a prediction, that discussion as to the meaning of the Greek word, or as to the apostolic practice, will soon be a thing of the past.



(2) The only other possible ground lies in delivering the whole question over to the domain of individual judgment, or preference, and this we must see is rather more hypothetical than practical. As long as there is a large body who hold that baptism is a specific act, determined by the meaning of the word, and by the practice of Christ and his apostles, and that the form is of symbolic import, so long there will be those who will not consent to a change upon any ground whatsoever. They hold that it is not a question of the right of individual judgment or private interpretation, nor of taste or convenience, but a question of loyalty to a divine command enjoining a specific act of symbolic import, and which can not be obeyed by substituting some other act in which the symbolic import is lost. They maintain that there is no room for individual preference where a specific divine command is involved. To such persons the fact of Christ's resurrection is declared, whenever the ordinance of baptism is practiced, and it also, in their view, symbolizes the death of the subject to a life of sin and his resurrection to a life of holiness. They consequently regard a change in the form as utterly destructive of the ordinance, since the symbolic and spiritual significance is destroyed by such a change.

We are, therefore, shut up to the conclusion that the only possible ground for uniformity of practice lies in ascertaining the form of baptism in the apostolic day, and the place given to it, and having settled these questions, to require a rigid conformity in modern practice. Surely this is safe, and it ought to be satisfactory. We wish, therefore, in this investigation, not to enter upon a discussion as to whether the church has a right to change the divinely established order and form, but we will seek, if possible, to discover the apostolic baptism, or at least, we will try to adduce some of the important evidences bearing on this question. In harmony with this purpose, we will consider,—

### **I. The importance of the ordinance.**

1. It was largely practiced by the harbinger of Christ. John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight. He preached the baptism of repentance, and the people, in large numbers, responded to his appeals, and submitted themselves to the ordinance.

#### **2. It was greatly honored by Christ.**

(1) He traveled about sixty miles to be baptized by John in Jordan, and on this occasion said: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." From this we may assuredly gather that Christ considered baptism a righteous act that must needs be performed.

(2) He embodied it in his commission. The same commission that says, "Teach all nations," says, "Baptize." The preaching and the baptizing are joined together in the last great commission that Christ gave to his apostles. Surely we ought to be slow to declare anything unimportant or non-essential that was embodied in the commission that authorizes the preaching of the gospel, and to which the apostles appealed for their authority, and upon which every preacher to-day must necessarily rely.

(3) It is performed by the authority of Christ, and inducts the subject into a threefold relation, *vis.*, with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons of the Godhead are thus associated together and acknowledged in the act.

3. God honored the institution by acknowledging Christ at the time of his obedience to this ordinance, and declared himself well pleased with his beloved Son. Is it not a significant fact that this act of baptism is associated with God's first public acknowledgment of Christ as his Son?

4. The apostles honored it very greatly and magnified it on all occasions. They seldom omitted to mention it, as is shown either by the report of the sermon, or by what took place immediately after.

(1) Peter, in preaching the first gospel sermon, said: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ Jesus for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

(2) Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus: "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling upon the name of the Lord."

(3) Philip must have preached the duty of baptism to the Eunuch, for at the close of the sermon the Eunuch declared: "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

(4) Peter, after preaching to the household of Cornelius, said: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

(5) Paul must have preached it to Lydia and her household. For we read that "she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul, and when she was baptized and her household, she besought us saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come unto my house and abide there."

(6) Paul certainly preached it to the jailer and his household, for they were baptized the same hour of the night.

(7) He must have preached it to the Corinthians, for we read: "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized."

(8) It was also preached to certain disciples at Ephesus, for we read: "And when they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

(9) It was evidently preached to the Romans, for Paul said: "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"

(10) It was preached to the Galatians, for Paul declared: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ, did put on Christ."

(11) It was preached to the Colossians, for Paul said of them: "Having been buried with him in baptism ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead."

All this shows clearly the prominence given to the ordinance of baptism in apostolic preaching and practice, and it is a very impressive lesson. They never belittled the ordinance or intimated that it was unimportant. The word non-essential was never applied by an apostle to anything commanded by Christ.

5. It is associated with salvation, as is shown by such language as the following: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." "The like figure whereunto" (referring to the eight souls saved from destruction by the flood in Noah's ark) "even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." We shrink from believing that baptism literally washes away sins, or that it is efficacious in and of itself for the putting away of sins; but still it remains true that it is associated with salvation from sin, in the Scriptures, by being named as one of the conditions upon which pardon is bestowed. In this view of the case it illbecomes a professed believer in Christ to belittle this sacred institution.

6. It is declared to be the ordinance by which we get into Christ, *i. e.*, his body—the church. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Jesus Christ were baptized unto his death" (Rom. vi. 3). "For as many of you as were baptized unto Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). Surely He who founded the church has a right to name the initiatory rite, and shall any one assume to change it or set it aside?

7. By its symbolic import it is intimately interwoven with the whole fabric of Christianity. The death of Christ for our

sins, his burial and his resurrection constitute the great facts of the gospel. Take these away, and the gospel is destroyed. The institution of baptism symbolizes these great facts. Paul declares: "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. vi. 4, 5). "Having been buried with him in baptism wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). Baptism seems to have been instituted as a fingerboard that should ever point back to the great gospel facts. It is, therefore, of highest importance and profoundest meaning.

8. All denominations, with possibly a single exception, admit its importance, since they make it a condition of membership, and in this many are far more Scriptural in practice than in theory; and it is certainly very illogical to demand baptism as an essential and invariable condition of membership in the church, and at the same time declare it to be non-essential. If baptism be non-essential, then the church is non-essential, since it is the invariable condition of membership.

In investigating this subject we are led to consider,—

## II. The proper subjects of baptism.

1. The commission of our Lord leaves no room for doubt on this point. "Go disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Here the baptizing commanded, seems to be commensurate with the teaching enjoined, and subsequent to it. Four things are named in this commission, and placed in a certain

order. First, Go ; secondly, Teach or Disciple ; thirdly, Baptize (evidently those who are taught) ; and fourthly, Teach the baptized to observe all things commanded by Christ. This order is natural, nay, may we not say necessary. The commission as given by Mark leads us to the same conclusion. "Go preach the gospel to every creature ; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here the phrase, "preach the gospel," stands as the equivalent of the word "disciple" in the commission as given by Matthew.

It should be noted in this connection that baptism is not a human invention, but a divinely appointed ordinance. Our tastes and preferences can, therefore, have nothing whatever to do in the case. It is settled by the Divine will and enjoined by the Divine command.

2. The same order is clearly set forth in many other passages of Scripture.

(1) We read, in John iv. 1, that "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John." This shows the disciples were made before they were baptized, which is certainly a very reasonable and logical process.

(2) The practice of Peter on Pentecost is in perfect accord with this. "Now when they [the Pentecostians] heard this [Peter's preaching], they were pierced to the heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? Then Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized : and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts ii. 37, 38, 41). Here is the same order : First, teaching ; second, the baptizing of those who received or believed the teaching. Clearly there were no infants baptized on this occasion, since only those who received

the word were baptized. Let it also be noted that the apostles were perfectly loyal to their commission. "Jesus said, Go teach all nations, baptizing them." Peter in the first gospel sermon shows us just how he understood his instructions. He preached Christ crucified and risen, and enjoined repentance and baptism upon those who believed. There is not an intimation that baptism was given to, or enjoined upon, any who were not believers.

(3) In Acts iii. 19 and iv. 4 we have another marked example of apostolic preaching in which the divine order is clearly indicated: "Repent ye therefore and turn again that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. . . . But many of them that heard the word, believed and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." Here believers alone were added to the church.

(4) In Acts v. 14 we read: "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both men and women." The same divine order is here apparent. Not the slightest intimation that any except believers were added to the Lord.

(5) Acts vi. 7 furnishes another case in point: "And the word of God increased, and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." Then it is clear that faith preceded obedience.

(6) Acts viii. 12 gives us an example of Philip's work: "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Infants were not included. Only those who believed Philip were baptized.

(7) Acts viii. 35-38 gives us another example of Philip's work: "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. And as they went

on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith: Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him." The same divine order is shown—preaching, believing, obeying.

(8) Saul's conversion, as recorded in Acts ix., is in perfect keeping with the foregoing. Jesus appeared to him, as Paul elsewhere tells us, to make him a minister and a witness—*i. e.*, an apostle. Paul having fallen to earth, overcome by the miraculous manifestation, exclaimed: "Who art thou, Lord?" The reply is given: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; but rise and enter into the city [Damascus], and it shall be told to thee what thou must do." Ananias, a disciple of Jesus, being at Damascus, was sent to Saul, and he "entered into the house and laying his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared to thee in the way which thou comest hast sent me that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized." In this instance the preaching that produced faith was done by Christ, and the case was then turned over to Ananias, who gave instruction concerning the duty of baptism, as we learn also from another scripture, and through whom the Holy Spirit was imparted. The order seen in the other cases of conversion is the order of events here—preaching, hearing, and believing come before baptism.

(9) The conversation at the household of Cornelius is another illustration of this order. Acts x. 44, 47, 48: "While Peter yet spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all of them which heard the word. . . . Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Some have



inferred that infants may have been included in this instance, but let it be borne in mind that infants are excluded from the rite of baptism by the commission; and unless it can be clearly shown that the apostles did baptize infants, the presumption is against the practice. In this case, however, the matter is made plain by other passages. Peter, in giving an account of this conversion of Cornelius and his household, said (Acts xv. 9): "And he made no distinction between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles] cleansing their hearts by faith." This was said to those in council who were considering the question of circumcision. Peter declared that God had given to the Gentiles the same evidence of favor (the Holy Spirit) that he had given to the Jewish Christians, and that he required of them the same faith in order to the cleansing of the heart. Furthermore, in Acts x. 2, we learn that Cornelius "feared God with all his heart." The same household that feared God were baptized by Peter. It is apparent that there were no infants in this house; or, if so, that they are not considered at all in the account given.

(10) Not only is this order of preaching, believing, and obeying observed throughout the apostles' work, but also in the work of their disciples. In Acts xi. 19-21 we read: "They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only the Jews. But there were some of them from Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they were come to Antioch spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." This is beautifully harmonious with the apostolic practice. The gospel was given to those who could receive it by faith and obedience.

(11) In Acts xvi. 14, 15, we have recorded the conversion of Lydia and her household. "And a certain woman named

Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God heard us; whose heart the Lord opened that she might give heed unto the things spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful come into my house and abide there." This is regarded as the Gibraltar of infant baptism by its advocates. Surely it must be a very precarious cause that rests on such a slender foundation. As has been pointed out, the inference is clearly against infant baptism, unless there is a clear case recorded. Is it known that there were infants in this house? Certainly not, since it is not known that Lydia was a married woman; and the presumption is that she was not, since she was away from home engaged in business. If married, there is no evidence she had children; and if she had children, there is no evidence that they were infants, or that they were present on this occasion. The Lord opened her heart that she attended to the things spoken by Paul, and this seems to have been a condition of her baptism. Why conclude that others of her household were baptized who did not attend to the things spoken by Paul? The case is made still stronger against the inference that infants were baptized by the fortieth verse of the same chapter: "And they went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren they comforted them and departed." Here the members of Lydia's house are called "brethren," a term scarcely applicable to infants.

(12) In Acts xvi. 30-34, we have an account of the jailer's conversion: "And he brought them out [of prison], and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." Evidently the household were to be saved on the same condition named to the jailer. "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in the house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their

stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. And he brought them up into his house, and set meat before them, and rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed in God." There could have been no infants, for Paul "spoke to him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in the house." All must have been old enough to understand, or else they are not taken into account at all. It is also said that all rejoiced. The case, therefore, seems perfectly clear. Baptism was given to believers in this instance, as in all the others mentioned.

(13) Paul says in I. Cor. i. 16: "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas." This passage has also been made to do duty in the cause of infant baptism, but the futility of the attempt appears when we read in I. Cor. xvi. 15, 16: "Now I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints), that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to everyone that helpeth in the work and laboreth." It follows, therefore, that all in this household were old enough to minister, or that the infants, if there were any, were not considered.

(14) We read in Acts xviii. 8: "And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Here as elsewhere we have faith as an antecedent of baptism, and we have also another instance of a believing household.

Surely it would be superfluous to pursue this inquiry further. From the commission of Christ, from the preaching and practice of the apostles, and from the teaching and practice of apostolic converts, we must conclude that faith and repentance are necessary and invariable antecedents of baptism. In every case on record in the New Testament, baptism was administered to a believer, or to believers, and in no case to infants, even by remote inference. A penitent believer is, therefore, a proper subject for baptism, and the only proper

subject so far as we can gather from New Testament teaching. We are led to consider,—

### III. The form of baptism.

I. This ought to be determined by the meaning of the word. It is, as it occurs in our authorized English versions, an Anglicized Greek word, and we must, therefore, if we would understand it, ascertain the meaning of the Greek term.

(a) The classic use of the word *baptizo* is evidently its New Testament use, unless for some reason it is used in a new and special sense. It is true that words sometimes take on new and special meanings. This is necessarily the case when new ideas have to be expressed by old words, but new meanings are never given to words when there are other words in use which clearly express the idea to be conveyed. The Greek was a very perfect language, and it had words in abundance to express all known acts. Now, unless the act expressed by the word *baptizo* was a new act entirely unknown to the Greeks, it is highly improbable that it would have been used in any sense differing from its ordinary classic use. Sophocles, a native Greek, in his lexicon says: "There is no evidence that Luke and Paul and other writers of the New Testament put upon this verb, *baptizo*, meanings not recognized by the Greeks." If immersion was the act described, *baptizo* would most certainly have been used. It is the word invariably used to describe that specific act. True, it was sometimes used in a tropical sense to describe the effects of an immersion, but the act of immersion was invariably expressed by *baptizo*, hence every standard Greek lexicon defines *baptizo* by "dip," "immerse," or their equivalents, as the primary meaning. On the supposition that sprinkling were the act to be described, would *baptizo* have been used? Most certainly not; since it was not a new act, and the Greek language had consequently a

word to express it, viz.: *raino*. If sprinkling were the act to be described, no intelligent Greek would have understood it under the term *baptidzo*, and it is inconceivable that the apostles would have used a term which, in the very nature of the case, would convey a false meaning when they had an unequivocal term at their command. The same line of argument holds with equal force against pouring. The Greek language has a word to express that specific act, viz.: *cheo*. (This is as nearly correct as English letters will express it.) The act of pouring would never occur to a Greek mind if *baptidzo* were used. These facts seem to me to be conclusive in themselves. Immersion is clearly and unequivocally expressed by *baptidzo*, and sprinkling and pouring are not expressed by that word, but could have been clearly expressed by words that would have been perfectly understood, if they had been in the mind of Christ or his apostles.

Furthermore, the Greeks had a word to express the general application of water, regardless of the manner in which the application was made, namely, *hudraino*. If the Christ or the apostles had meant that baptism could be performed regardless of the method of applying the water, they had a Greek word at their command to express that idea. If they had used the word *hundraino* we would understand that baptism could be performed by the application of water regardless of form, that is to say, it might be sprinkled or poured upon the subject, or it might overwhelm him, as in a bath.

(b) Hebrew scholarship sustains this conclusion.

(1) The Septuagint, a Greek version of the Old Testament Scriptures, made about 280 B. C., uses the word *baptidzo* to translate the Hebrew *tabhal* (pronounced *taval*). This word occurs sixteen times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and is every time rendered in English by dip or plunge. One example will be sufficient for illustration: "Then went he [Naaman] down and dipped [Hebrew, *tabhal*; Greek, *baptidzo*] seven times in

Jordan." The use of the Greek *baptidzo* to translate the Hebrew *tabhal*, which invariably means to dip or plunge, shows what the Hebrew scholars understood it to mean.

(2) Josephus, the Jewish historian, born A. D. 37, invariably uses the word *baptidzo* to express an immersion or an overwhelming. He speaks of immersing (*baptidzo*) a branch of hyssop in spring-water; of a ship just about to be submerged (*baptidzo*); of a young high-priest drowned by being continually pressed down (*baptidzo*) in a swimming bath; of a man who suicided by plunging (*baptidzo*) his sword into his own bowels; of waves rising so high that men were overwhelmed (*baptidzo*) by them; of persons submerged (*baptidzo*) in the sea, being killed by darts or caught by the enemy, if they lifted their heads above water. The foregoing examples are abundant to show Josephus' understanding of the word.

(3) Jewish proselytes were invariably immersed, according to the old commentary Siphre, the Talmud, and Maimonides. In these authorities, the root expressing the action is *tabhal*. *Baptidzo* would consequently express an action with which Jews in the time of Christ were already familiar.

(c) The scholarship of the world from the apostolic day onward is clearly in accord with the foregoing conclusion. A few testimonies are here submitted, out of a vast number that might be adduced. We do not burden these pages with specific references to the works from which the quotations are taken. Any one desiring to verify the quotations can locate them without difficulty. All the passages from Greek authors can be found in "Conant's Baptidzein," and scores of others equally as strong and pertinent.

(1) Barnabas, who lived in the apostolic age, said in regard to baptism: "We indeed go down into the water." True, the writings ascribed to him are, in part at least, considered Apocryphal, but certainly they are of very early origin, or they would not have been attributed to him.

(2) Hermas, in the first century, referring to baptism, said :  
 "We go down into the water."

(3) Justin Martyr, A. D. 140, "We represent our Lord's suffering by baptism in a pool."

(4) Tertullian, an eminent Latin Father, 160 A. D., "Know ye not that so many of us as were immersed [Lat., *tingo*] into Christ Jesus were immersed [*tingo*] into his death, . . . for by an image we die in baptism [*baptisma*], but we truly rise in the flesh as also did Christ." Referring to Christ's commission, as recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19, he says : "And last of all commanding that they should be immersed [*tingo*] into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." He also says : "Then we are three times immersed [Lat., *mergo*], answering somewhat more than our Lord prescribed in the gospel." Once more : "As of baptism [*baptismus*] itself there is a bodily act that we are immersed [*mergo*] in water ; a spiritual effect that we are freed from sin."

(5) Clement of Alexandria, A. D. 200 : "You were led to a bath as Christ was conveyed to the sepulchre, and there thrice immersed, to signify Christ's three days' burial."

(6) Cypran, Bishop of Carthage, A. D. 200, in reference to baptism, speaks of being "bathed in salutary water."

(7) Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, A. D. 315, said : "The body is dipped in water."

(8) Ambrose, A. D. 340 : "Thou wast asked, 'Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty?' Thou saidst, 'I believe,' and thou didst sink down [*mergo*], that is, thou wast buried."

(9) Athanasius, A. D. 328 : "To immerse a child three times in a pool, or bath, and to emerse him ; this shows the death and resurrection of Christ on the third day."

(10) Gregory, of Nyssa, A. D. 328 : "Coming into the water, the kindred element of the earth, we hide ourselves in it as the Saviour did in the earth."

(11) Jerome, called "the greatest of all expounders," A. D. 342: "And thrice we are immersed [*mergo*] that there may appear one sacrament of the Trinity." We are not concerned here about the question of trine-immersion. It is unquestionably true that some of the old church fathers fell into that error, but this in no way invalidates their testimony as to the fact of immersion.

(12) Chrysostom, A. D. 347: "To be baptized and to sink down, then to emerge, as a symbol of descent to the grave and ascent from it. And, therefore, Paul calls baptism a burial when he says: 'We are therefore buried with him by baptism into death.'" Also he says: "For a ship that has become filled with water is soon baptized and becomes deep under the waves."

(13) Cyril, A. D. 350: "Thou going down into the water, and in a manner buried in the waves as he in the rock, art raised again, walking in newness of life."

(14) Basil the Great, A. D. 370: "By three immersions we represent the death of Christ—the bodies of those that are baptized are buried in water."

Space forbids us to follow the line of witnesses closely, but the testimony is uniform. Passing over several centuries, we come to,—

(15) Martin Luther, A. D. 1483: "Baptism is a sign of both death and resurrection. Being moved by this reason, I would advise those who are to be baptized to be altogether dipped into the water, as the word doth express and the mystery doth signify."

(16) Cranmer, the martyr, A. D. 1489: "The dipping into the water doth betoken that the old Adam, with all his sins and evil lusts, ought to be drowned and killed by daily contrition and repentance."

(17) John Calvin, A. D. 1509, after giving it as his opinion that the form is immaterial, says: "The very word baptize,



however, signifies immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient churches."

(18) Grotius, A. D. 1583: "'Buried with him by baptism.' Not only the word baptism, but the very form of it, indicates this."

(19) Richard Baxter, A. D. 1615: "It is commonly confessed by us of the Anabaptists, as our commentators declare, that in the apostles' times the baptized were dipped over head in the water."

(20) John Edwards, A. D. 1637: "The immersion into water was thought to signify the death of Christ, and their coming out his rising again, and did no less represent their own resurrection."

(21) John Wesley, A. D. 1703: "Buried with him—alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion."

(22) George Whitfield, A. D. 1714: "It is certain that in the words of our text—Romans vi. 4—there is an allusion to the manner of baptizing, which was immersion."

(23) George Campbell, A. D. 1719, says that one who argues that "the word rendered in the New Testament *baptize*, means more properly to sprinkle than to plunge" never fails, with persons of knowledge, to betray the cause he would defend.

(24) MacKnight, A. D. 1721: "In baptism, the baptized person is buried under water."

(25) Adam Clarke, A. D. 1762: "When he [the candidate] came up out of the water he seemed to have a resurrection to life."

(26) Moses Stuart, A. D. 1780: "Christians began somewhat early to deflect from the ancient practice of immersion."

(27) Olshausen, A. D. 1796, in commenting on Romans vi. 4, says: "The submersion merely prefigures the death and burial of the old man; the second half—the *emersion*—the resurrection of the new man."

(28) Albert Barnes, A. D. 1798, in referring to Romans vi. 4, says: "It is altogether probable that the apostle in this place had allusion to the custom of baptizing by immersion."

(29) Philip Schaff, A. D. 1819, says: "Respecting the form of baptism, therefore, the impartial historian is compelled by exegesis and history substantially to yield the point to the Baptists."

(30) Thayer, in his Greek New Testament Lexicon, says: "In the New Testament it [baptism] is used particularly of the rite of sacred ablution, first instituted by John the Baptist, afterwards, by Christ's command, received by Christians and adjusted to the contents and nature of their religion, *viz.*: an immersion in water performed as a sign of the removal of sin, and administered to those who, impelled by a desire for salvation, sought admission to the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom.

Space forbids to multiply quotations farther. Scores of eminent scholars, scattered through all the centuries from the apostolic day onward to the present time, and representing the various Christian bodies almost without exception—certainly all the leading denominations—have testified in the plainest and most unequivocal way to the fact that immersion was the apostolic baptism. It may be said that the voice of scholarship is overwhelmingly, nay, almost universal, in favor of immersion and immersion only. If it be asked why so many of these scholars departed from the acknowledged apostolic custom, it may be answered that many regarded baptism as non-essential to salvation, and hence held the form to be a matter of indifference, while others defended affusion on the ground of church authority, claiming for the church the right to exercise discretionary power in such a case. This is true universally of Catholic authorities.

(d) The history of affusion is conclusive in favor of immersion.

(1) Sprinkling was first administered for baptism in A. D. 251, in the case of Novatian, a Roman presbyter. Being very sick, he was sprinkled in bed, as a substitute for immersion, which was considered impracticable in his case, as he lay in hourly expectation of death. His sprinkling did not receive the confirmation of the church-authorities. He was elected to the office of bishop by his friends, in opposition to Cornelius, but his claim to the office was disputed by his rival, on account of the irregularity practiced in the matter of his baptism.

(2) Stephen III. was Pope of Rome from 733 to 757. When the Lombards invaded the Duchy of Rome he was compelled to flee. He took refuge in Frankish territory with King Pepin. The monks of Cressy asked him whether pouring or sprinkling would be allowed for baptism in case of necessity, for infants, and he gave his consent. This, so far as we know, was the first sanction for the practice from the head of the Roman church.

(3) In 1311, the Council of Ravenna legalized sprinkling, leaving it to the choice of the officiating minister. For centuries prior to this, affusion had been practiced, but only in cases of necessity, as in the case of sick persons. It was called "clinical" baptism, because administered to sick persons (*Clinici*). Thus gradually the practice found its way into the church, and it seems passing strange, in view of these facts, that any one can be found to seriously contend for the practice on the ground that it is apostolic. A more baseless assumption can not well be imagined.

(4) Catholic authorities are perfectly clear and consistent in this matter. Bishop Kenrick says: "The change of discipline which has taken place in regard to baptism should not surprise us, for although the church is but the dispenser of the sacraments which her divine Spouse instituted, she rightfully exercises discretionary power as to the manner of their administration." Bossuet, in writing concerning a certain decree

respecting another question—that of communion—says: “The case was much the same as baptism by immersion, as clearly grounded on Scripture as communion under both kinds could be, and which, nevertheless, *had been changed into affusion* with as much ease and as little contradiction as one kind was established, so that the same reason stood for retaining one as well as the other.” Cardinal Gibbons says: “For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion; but since the twelfth century the practice of baptism by affusion has prevailed in the Catholic Church, as the manner is attended with less inconvenience than baptism by immersion.”

(e) The Greek Catholic Church has always practiced immersion exclusively. It is impossible to make people, well acquainted with the Greek, and dominated by the Greek influence, believe that *baptidzo* means to sprinkle or pour. It would be just as easy to convince an Englishman that “to dip” means “to sprinkle” or “to pour,” as to convince a Greek that *baptidzo* means the same as *raino* or *cheo*.

It is a historic fact, established beyond the possibility of successful contradiction, that affusion had its origin in the Latin church about the middle of the third century, and that it became general in the Roman church much later, and was formally legalized in the beginning of the fourteenth century.

2. The New Testament clearly determines what the action of baptism is.

(1) It should be noticed that water is the element to be used. “Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?” (Acts x. 47). This was the language of Peter at the house of Cornelius, when the first Gentile converts were admitted to the kingdom of God. It seems strange that in the face of such language, any should claim that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the only baptism, or the one baptism, taught in the

New Testament. Here it is perfectly clear that water is the element. Jesus commanded his disciples to be baptized. Man can obey this command if water is the element to be used, but obedience is impossible on the hypothesis that the baptism commanded is that of the Holy Spirit. This can not be performed by man, and hence we may safely conclude that Christ never commanded it as a work to be performed by man. How natural, therefore, for Peter to say: "Who can forbid water?"

(2) The candidate for baptism went to the water. "Then went out unto him [John] Jerusalem and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. iii. 5, 6). "And as they went on their way they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts viii. 36). "And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes and was baptized, he and all his, immediately, and he brought them up into his house, and set meat before them" (Acts xvi. 33, 34). This refers to the baptism of the jailer. He had first brought Paul and Silas out of the prison before Paul preached. In all probability they went into the jailer's house, since the household were obedient, and hence evidently heard the sermon. After baptism, he brought them into the house, which shows they must have gone out to be baptized. When we consider that there is not a case of New Testament baptism where it is stated, or where we need to infer that the water was brought to the candidate for baptism, must we not conclude that the candidate invariably went to the water?

(3) Much water was required. "And John was also baptizing in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there" (John iii. 23). This remark can only be explained on the hypothesis that John was practicing immersion. Affusion does not require "much water."

(4) The candidate and the administrator went down into the water. "And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts viii. 38).

(5) They came up out of the water. "And when they came up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more" (Acts viii. 39).

(6) It is a covering up. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death" (Romans vi. 4). It is hard to conceive of being buried with Christ through baptism unless there was a covering up in baptism. The literal burial may be taken to indicate the metaphorical burial.

3. The metaphorical usage of the word is conclusive in favor of immersion.

(1) It is called a birth. Christ said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5).

(2) It is called a burial. Romans vi. 4, already quoted, shows this.

(3) It is called a resurrection. "Having been buried with him in baptism wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12).

(4) It is called a planting. "For if we become united [planted, *sumphutot*] with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans vi. 5).

(5) It is called a washing. "But ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God" (I. Corinthians vi. 11). "According to his mercy he saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 5).

From the foregoing quotations the following counts are gleaned concerning New Testament baptism: (1) Water is required. (2) The candidate went to the water. (3) Much water was required. (4) The candidate went down into the

water. (5) He came up out of the water. (6) He was covered. It symbolizes: (7) A birth. (8) A burial. (9) A resurrection. (10) A planting. (11) A washing. Affusion meets one count only—the first. Water is the element. It does not require much water. The candidate is not required to go to the water, nor down into the water, nor to come up out of the water. He is not covered. It does not represent a birth, nor a burial, nor a resurrection, nor a planting, nor a washing.

Immersion meets every count. It requires water, much water, the candidate goes to the water, down into the water, he comes up out of the water, he is covered. It represents a birth, a burial, a resurrection, a planting, and a washing. Is not the conclusion irresistible that immersion, and immersion only, is the New Testament baptism?

#### IV. The design of baptism.

I. It is introductory. It is the institution appointed by Christ, by which its subjects are brought into a new relationship to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "Go teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (Matthew xxviii. 18). "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). This doubtless refers to the earthly kingdom, or the church. "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (Romans vi. 3). To be baptized into Christ is to be baptized into his church or kingdom. It is to come into a new relationship to him. He is by this act the acknowledged Prophet, Priest, and King. "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (I. Corinthians xii. 13). The body of Christ is his church, of which he is the head. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians iii. 27). It is therefore initiatory. These passages are conclusive on this point.

2. It is for the remission of sins.

(1) The commission according to Mark reads: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." We may learn from Luke's statement of the commission what this salvation is: "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, unto all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." The salvation referred to is, therefore, remission of sins, or in other words, pardon of sin.

(2) Peter said, in his memorable Pentecostal sermon: "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 38). This harmonizes with Christ's language in the commission. The question, "What shall we do?" which the Pentecostal hearers propounded was prompted by Peter's sermon, in which he charged sin upon them. They were convicted, and asked: "What shall we do?" Evidently they meant, what shall we do to be saved from our sins? Peter named two conditions: repentance and baptism. They already believed, and hence we may gather that the baptism of penitent believers is for the remission of sins.

(3) The conversion of Saul shows the design of baptism. Ananias said to him: "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins." Saul had been told to go into the city, where he would learn what he must do. He went, and received the command to be baptized and wash away his sins. This is a figurative way of expressing remission of sins, hence we see that Saul received the same instructions that Peter gave to the Pentecostal enquirers. It is true that neither faith nor repentance is mentioned, but the reason is plain. In Saul's case, both faith and repentance were present when Ananias came to him. He, therefore, commanded the only step yet remaining to be taken in order to remission of sins.



(4) The same conclusion is reached when we consider that all spiritual blessings are realized in Christ and not out of him. Out of Christ there is no salvation promised. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature : old things have passed away, behold all things have become new" (II. Corinthians v. 17). "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians i. 14; Galatians i. 7). "Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians i. 3). It follows that not only forgiveness of sins, but all spiritual blessings, are found in Christ, and as baptism is the appointed ordinance by which the believing penitent gets into Christ, it is consequently for or unto remission of sins.

Baptism is very beautifully and appropriately called a birth. We are born into the kingdom by the birth of water and of Spirit ; as the new-born babe is sinless, so the new-born babe in Christ is freed from sin by the pardon of God.

We are not, however, to understand that the meritorious cause of pardon lies in baptism ; on the contrary, the blood of Christ alone cleanses from all sin. "Christ died for our sins." "Much more then being now justified by his blood we shall be saved from the wrath of God through him." "In whom we have our redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our sins." "Unto him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins by his blood." All this is clear and unequivocal. The merit lies in Christ's blood. Baptism is simply a condition upon which the blessing is obtained. It is the divinely appointed place where God meets the sinner, prepared by faith and repentance, and forgives his sins ; but the blood of Christ is the ground of pardon. The believing penitent is, therefore, baptized by the authority of Christ in water unto remission of sins and into Christ's body, the church. He thus comes into a new relation with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and into the enjoyment of the fullness of spiritual blessings.

3. It is designed as a symbol. That is, it is pictorial.

(1) It is peculiarly fitting that the rite introducing us into a new life should symbolize the leading features of the change involved, especially when this change is radical. The Christian man is called a new creature. "Old things have passed away: behold all things have become new." It is impossible to conceive of anything more radical than the change involved in passing from the "kingdom of Satan" into the "kingdom of God's dear Son." Therefore, this change is called a death and resurrection, and also a birth. The individual dies to sin, and is resurrected to a life of holiness. The form of baptism beautifully represents this change. It is a burial and a resurrection, or, to change the figure, a birth, and consequently symbolizes the corresponding spiritual facts.

(2) This blessing is, however, made possible by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Christ died for our sins, and rose for our justification. How beautifully appropriate, therefore, that the institution of initiation should symbolize the gospel facts. We are, therefore, in baptism buried and raised in the likeness of Christ's burial and resurrection. Surely an institution so pictorially beautiful and suggestive is not unworthy of its divine origin, and it may well call forth, not only our profoundest respect, but our deepest reverence.

But while the forgiveness of sins is important; nay, indispensable, and baptism is the appointed place where the properly prepared person comes into the enjoyment of this great favor, yet this is not the crowning blessing. To the baptized believer a great promise is given, *vis.*, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Here is the climax of divine grace. All that goes before is preparatory to this, and out of this flows all the fruits of Christian life. We are, therefore, naturally led, in the next place, to consider the subject of the Holy Spirit, and to this supreme subject the following chapter is devoted.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.\*

**Introduction :** When Moses came to the burning bush the Lord spoke to him in these impressive words: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Surely in coming to the investigation of such a subject as this the admonition given to Moses may not be inapplicable. Let us approach this study with a reverential spirit, realizing that we are treading on holy ground. Let us come with sincere purpose and earnest desire to know the truth, and let us, with meekness, hear and receive the divine instruction concerning this all-important matter.

1. If we have ever had any doubt as to the importance or practical nature of this question, all such doubts will be dispelled by even a brief survey of Bible teaching along this line. No student of the New Testament can have failed to notice the conspicuous place given to it in the teaching and preaching of Christ and his apostles. In almost every chapter this subject, in some of its phases, is intruded upon the attention.

(1) John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, who seems to have comprehended more fully than any other apostle the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, said: "Hereby we know that he [Christ] abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us." Also: "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he

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\* A subject of such magnitude and importance can not be satisfactorily treated in the limits of a single chapter. We refer the reader to the work entitled "The Office of the Holy Spirit," by R. Richardson, for a more comprehensive treatment of the subject. I have received much valuable assistance from this work in the preparation of this chapter, and I know of no better treatise on the subject.

in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." These passages teach that conscious fellowship with Christ is secured through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

(2) Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says: "In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Here Paul makes the reception of the Holy Spirit the official seal of our title to the purchased possession. He also says to the Galatians, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith," thus virtually declaring the great and final aim of the gospel ministration to be the impartation of the Holy Spirit. In the light of such scriptures, and many others equally striking, it would seem well nigh impossible for us to magnify in our minds too greatly the importance that attaches to this subject. To ignore it is to ignore the most prominent Bible theme, and one that sustains intimate and vital relations to the whole question of human redemption. Whoever despises this subject shuts himself out from the richest and most productive fields of Bible truth, and thereby disqualifies himself from receiving a comprehensive, clear, harmonious, and consistent view of Bible teaching. Nay, more; he deprives himself of the sweetest and profoundest enjoyments of the Christian life.

2. It may be well just here to call attention to an impression that prevails as to the mysterious character of this subject. While the importance of the theme would, no doubt, be generally conceded, yet there is a popular idea that it is very dark and difficult, if not entirely incomprehensible, and consequently many have been deterred from giving to it any serious thought or earnest study. Others try to explain away everything that seems mysterious, or that is too deep for the sounding line of human reason, and thus reduce the whole question to a rationalistic basis, and bring every phase of the subject within the ready compass of the powers of the human

mind. This is certainly a most unreasonable undertaking. Without any question there are serious difficulties to be encountered in such an investigation. Mysteries present themselves which seem to baffle human understanding, and are, no doubt, too deep for the finite mind to grasp in its present environment, but it is not true that there are few subjects entirely free from mystery? Even in matters pertaining to the purely physical world, mysteries abound which have defied the solution of the most gifted minds. With all our boasted science we can scarcely be said to have done more than give names to natural processes and forces, of the real nature of which we know almost nothing. We talk about attractive and repellant forces, chemical affinity, cohesion, capillary attraction, gravitation, animal and vegetable life, etc., all of which are but names for mysteries—convenient coverings under which to hide our ignorance. If mystery thus abounds in the lower world, much more might we expect to find it as we ascend from the physical into the spiritual domain. Especially is this true when we come with our finite powers to grapple with the infinities of the Deity. There are some things that we can not understand, but which we must nevertheless accept. To receive them involves less of mystery than to reject them. It is, however, true that this subject of the Holy Spirit is treated of extensively in the sacred Scriptures, and constitutes, therefore, an important part of revealed truth, and is consequently a legitimate subject of inquiry. Whatever aspects of this question fall within the range of the human understanding may and should become a part of our religious knowledge. We will consider,—

#### I. The agency of the Spirit as revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures.

No doubt the New Testament constitutes the richest field of inquiry respecting this subject, but it will be quite useful

and interesting to briefly note some of the general aspects of the subject as developed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and especially under the Mosaic economy. In the very opening sentences of Genesis we read, "And the Spirit of God moved" (marginal reading, "was brooding") "upon the face of the waters." Here the Spirit of God is represented as the active agent in the creation of the material world. Job says: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." In this passage, physical life is referred to the Spirit of God as its source. Also, to the Spirit of God is referred the wisdom of Joseph which he displayed in the interpretation of dreams; the wisdom shown by Joshua in his conquest of Canaan; and the executive wisdom of Solomon, manifested in his administration of the kingdom. It is also represented as striving with men who had apostatized; as qualifying men to perform miracles in attestation of some divinely appointed mission work; as giving unto men prophetic power, as displayed by the many Old Testament prophets; as even granting to men mechanical skill; as imparting the spirit of valor; and in one case, as bestowing superior physical strength. In short, all extraordinary gifts and powers of body and mind are referred to this divine Spirit. Nor were its powers confined to men. Moses' rod had imparted to it peculiar powers by the Spirit. To Elijah's bones by the same agency was given the power to restore a dead body to life, and to Balaam's ass was granted the power of human speech. It is important to note that the Spirit was given to some, taken from others, but never promised as a blessing available to all upon plainly expressed conditions. What expectation is, therefore, aroused by the prophecy of Joel, which foretells of its outpouring upon all flesh which would take place under the glorious reign of Christ! By this brief reference to the work of the Spirit as revealed in the Old Testament we are prepared to see the marked difference in the

office and work of the Spirit as revealed under the new dispensation. It may safely be said that the agency of the Spirit under the Mosaic economy seems to be confined chiefly to the work of inspiring and miraculously endowing the prophets and special individuals for their great and important work, and that its manifestation looks to the accomplishment of special, extraordinary, and, in a certain sense, temporary ends; important and wonderful it is true, but subordinate and preparatory. It was confined to a narrow circle, and its manifestations were chiefly, if not entirely, of a miraculous character. This naturally leads us to notice,—

## II. The prominence given to this subject in the personal ministry of Christ.

I. The prophetic utterances bearing on Christ's spiritual qualifications are clear and emphatic. Seven hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ, the Prophet Isaiah foretold the fullness of spiritual endowment that should characterize the Messiah in the following plain and explicit language: "There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. xi. 1-5). Also we read these most thrilling words from the same prophet: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called

trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified" (Isa. lxi. 1-3). Such wonderful predictions lay well the foundation for the many New Testament utterances relative to the spiritual endowment of Christ. At the time of his baptism the Holy Spirit descended in visible form, and abode upon him, by which sign John, the harbinger, had been told he should recognize the Messiah. Soon after this wonderful event, Christ, in speaking to an audience composed of his own townspeople, quotes the prophecy from Isaiah, already referred to, and appropriates it to himself by declaring that it was that day fulfilled in their ears. Also it is clearly taught!

2. That Christ's work was accomplished through the agency of the Spirit. From the time of his baptism onward, his whole life and work seemed to be under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit. "He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke iv. 1), where he was tempted; and he returned "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke iv. 14). His miracles were wrought through the agency of the Spirit. His words were said to be the words of God, because "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John iii. 34). Even his final great sin-offering was made, we are told, by the "Eternal Spirit," and his resurrection was accomplished by the same agency. It thus appears that the Spirit of God was the effective power in the life, teaching, and work of Christ. We are thus prepared for the declaration of Paul that: "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

3. However, this supreme possession of spiritual presence and power was not to be confined to Christ alone. It was the Divine purpose that this great blessing should be brought within the reach of all who would avail themselves of the gracious gift. The Scripture teaching on this point is plain and unmistakable. God said to John the Baptist: "Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit"



(John i. 33). The manifest and necessary deduction from this language is that the special characteristic function of Christ would be to baptize in the Holy Spirit. John himself said, in speaking of his coming: "He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire" (Matt. iii. 11). The time and manner of this announcement indicates that the baptizing here referred to would be at least one of the characteristics, if not the distinguishing feature, of Christ's ministry. I am aware that some regard this as a prophecy that was fulfilled on Pentecost by the outpouring of the Spirit and the miraculous accompaniments, conspicuous among which were the "tongues parting asunder like as of fire," but this view is certainly unwarranted by the facts. This function of Christ's ministry—which was strikingly set forth by God in the utterance above quoted, and also by John in language addressed not to a few persons, but to a great concourse of people, both Pharisees and Sadducees—certainly could not have exhausted itself in the bestowment of temporary spiritual gifts confined to a very few individuals. If we remember that John had before him two classes, the one honest and sincere, the other selfish and insincere, and that in referring to the coming One, he represents him as separating these classes, gathering the one class—the wheat—into his garner, but destroying the other—the chaff—with fire, we will be able to understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the baptism by fire to which John refers. To me it seems far more reasonable to refer this language to a double function, exercised by Christ in blessing the one class by what is figuratively called a baptism of the Spirit, and in punishing the other by a baptism of fire. This also harmonizes with the prophetic view of Christ's office, which represents him as proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord," and also "the day of vengeance of our God." In this language the double office is pointed out.

That the dispensation of the Spirit to believers was one of the important functions of Christ is further established by many of his utterances, as recorded by the evangelists. On one occasion he said to his disciples: "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" This would seem to be further explained by his language on another occasion: "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believed on him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Again he says: "If I go not away the Comforter will not come, but if I go away I will send him unto you." Christ explains, in other passages in the same connection, that the Comforter is the Holy Spirit, and also calls him the Spirit of truth. Space, however, forbids me to multiply these passages, which are familiar to every Bible student.

This branch of the subject may be summed up in these statements: (1) That Christ possessed the Spirit in all fullness, *i. e.*, without measure; (2) that his work was accomplished through the agency of the Spirit; and (3) that he has become the dispenser of the Holy Spirit to others through the means and agencies that he has ordained. Just here it is necessary, in order to anything like a clear and intelligent understanding of this question, for us to note,—

III. A distinction that exists between the special extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and the abiding gift of the Spirit, which Christ promised to his disciples, and which constitutes the crowning blessing of the new institution.

1. Christ, in language addressed to his disciples before his crucifixion, which has been already quoted, gives them a promise of a great spiritual blessing not before enjoyed.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away I will send him unto you." Another passage declares: "The Holy Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified." This language clearly points to the coming of something entirely new, which Christ calls the Holy Spirit, which could not come so long as Christ remained, and must consequently have been very different from the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. These had been witnessed in great profusion during the personal ministry of Christ, and had been seen in greater or less abundance at different times under the previous dispensations. In fact, it may be said they belong to all dispensations, and seem to have performed much the same function in each. All of these special manifestations were of a miraculous character, and had a special object in view, and were in no sense abiding gifts.

2. A clear distinction, then, exists, and should be kept in mind. Paul said, "Whether there be prophecies they shall be done away, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge [no doubt referring to miraculous knowledge] it shall be done away," but the new gift which Christ was to send was to abide forever. These special powers were given as the Holy Spirit pleased, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, sometimes to righteous and sometimes to wicked persons, and even to inanimate objects. We can see no reason why these special spiritual gifts might not be given to, or taken from, one enjoying the permanent gift without in any way affecting it. Any agency, whether intellectual, moral or physical, might be employed by the Spirit of God, and endowed with temporary miraculous powers for special purposes, and such operations seemed entirely independent of the abiding gift promised by Christ, and which is the great distinguishing characteristic of his dispensation.

(1) The superiority ascribed to the gift promised by Christ serves to bring out this difference in still stronger light. The disciples to whom Christ made the promise of sending another Comforter had, before this time, been marvelously endowed with these miraculous powers. To them had been given the power to cure diseases, cast out devils, tread on serpents with impunity, and drink deadly poison without injury, and yet they were not in the enjoyment of that crowning spiritual blessing called the Comforter, or Spirit of truth, and which Christ distinctly says they could not have so long as he remained with them. He even declares that this promised blessing is so great that even his leaving them would be expedient for them in order that the blessing might be enjoyed. When we remember how great a blessing Christ had been to these followers of his; how they leaned on him for support; how they looked to him for guidance, even as little children look to a parent; and how strongly they were united to him by bonds of tenderest love; how he had become to them more than all others and all else; and then also remember that all these wondrous blessings, which were realized in the personal fellowship of Christ, were to be more than made good after Christ's departure by the descent of the Spirit, something of the magnitude of this blessing begins to dawn upon us. Wonderful as it may seem, the Christian of to-day, in the enjoyment of the indwelling presence of the Spirit, has a greater blessing than Christ's personal bodily presence on earth could be to him. Nay, is it not thus that Christ comes to us, and makes his abode with us, and thus becomes our abiding, constant companion and friend? It thus appears how the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, whom Christ declared to be equal to any born of woman, and who was filled with the Holy Spirit in the special sense referred to, but who passed away like the other prophets of Israel without having enjoyed the priceless gift vouchsafed

to the believer under the reign of Christ. These special spiritual endowments should, therefore, be clearly discriminated from the indwelling of the Spirit. Their mission was simply confirmatory and temporary under all dispensations, and might be possessed by an individual without even entitling him to the blessings of salvation.

(2) This distinction between the extraordinary miraculous endowments of the Spirit, and the gift of the Spirit promised by Christ, is also shown by the fact that these special gifts might become a source of injury to the possessor by filling him with pride and vainglory. On one occasion the disciples who had been sent out by Christ on a mission, and endowed with this miraculous gift, returned to him evidently in a proud, exultant spirit, glorying in their phenomenal power, and said, "Even the devils are subject unto us in thy name." Christ warns them of their danger by saying, "Rejoice not that spirits are subject unto you, but that your names are written in heaven." It seems also that the disciples at Corinth had fallen into this same fault. Possessing various spiritual endowments, great contention arose among them as to the comparative excellence of their respective gifts. Paul writes a letter to correct this evil. He does not disparage this class of gifts, but shows their real object, and points the possessors of them to something which he calls more excellent, and which he designates by the term love. This love which Paul contrasts with the special gifts is one of the fruits of that Spirit promised to all believers, and thus its superiority over special gifts, in the mind of the apostle, is shown.

We are now ready to consider,—

**IV. The final step in the progressive unfolding of the Divine plan for the salvation of men in which the great purpose of grace is realized.**

1. How gradually has the light of Divine truth been shed upon the world. In the beginning God saw fit to give a few

obscure promises, a few simple types. Long ages rolled by, while men walked in the dim twilight, until the world was ready for a fuller light. Then a clearer promise, was given; a peculiar people was chosen to whom was committed a complicated system of types and shadows; a civil and religious code; a sanctuary in which dwelt the symbolic presence of God; a ritual of wondrous beauty, and a priesthood of Divine appointment. Again long ages rolled by, while from time to time mighty prophets appeared, inspired by God, to speak his words of exhortation, warning, and promise, but still the perfect light had not come, and the fullness of blessing was not enjoyed. The world waited in expectancy for something promised, but as yet but faintly comprehended. Finally the dawn of a new and brighter day appeared. A new light is illuminating the moral heavens. Behold, "the Sun of righteousness has risen with healing his beams." Now type is to give place to antetype, shadow to substance, symbol to reality. The law which Paul declares was a school-master has done its great work of preparation. The office of the pedagogue is fulfilled; the world is passing to its fuller inheritance. No longer will it be a question as to whether men shall worship in Jerusalem, or on Gerizim, but the whole earth will be a temple, and every spot where man may stand an altar from which the true spiritual incense may ascend to God. Angel voices are now heard by Judæan shepherds, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men." The infant Jesus, the world's Redeemer, sleeps in the Bethlehem manger. Intent on his Father's business he stands and disputes with the lawyers and doctors. Loyal to every Divine requirement he comes from Galilee to Jordan to the baptism of John. Filled with wisdom he sits in the mountain and utters those words for which the ages had waited. Burning with love and sympathy he goes through the cities and villages healing men's maladies, comforting the sorrowing, and

preaching the gospel to the poor; yea, as has been beautifully and truthfully said, "He walks the earth in the sight of men and angels, and shows how great and grand a thing a man may be." True to his mission, and loyal to God and man, he endures the cross and despises the shame, and thus accomplishing the great sin offering. Finally having vanquished death, he rises a triumphant conqueror, "bringing life and immortality to light."

2. The gift of the Holy Spirit, bestowed in accordance with the promise of Christ, stands out with wonderful prominence in the Divine record. It may be said to constitute an epoch in the history of redemption. It was a new manifestation of the Divine presence among men. Jesus had said: "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth." Also: "If a man love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." "It is expedient that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come, but if I go I will send him unto you." This Comforter referred to by Christ was to take the place of his personal presence. Through this Comforter God and Christ were to come and dwell perpetually in the hearts of the faithful.

3. One more preparatory step remained to be taken before the great and consummating blessing could be enjoyed. Christ had not yet been glorified, and this must needs take place before the great gift could be bestowed. But Jesus has told his disciples that he is going; he has prayed to God that he may be glorified with the glory he had with the Father before the world was; he has given his last commission, and spoken his last words. Now he ascends on high, "leading captivity captive," accompanied by an escort of celestial spirits. The gates of the heavenly Jerusalem open to receive him, and he

is by the right hand of God, exalted and crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords." The last remaining condition in order to the fulfillment of the promise is now realized; let us with expectancy await the issue.

4. Our anticipation is met on the day of Pentecost. "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye are endued with power from on high," Jesus had said. "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place, and suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." This, says Peter to the multitude, is the fulfillment of the prophecy made by Joel,— "And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth my Spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. And your young men shall see visions. And your old men shall dream dreams. Yes, and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days, will I pour forth of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy." Many, having believed the preaching of Peter, were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This is something entirely new in the history of redemption. Never before, under any dispensation, had such a promise been made on such conditions. Never before had such blessings been enjoyed. How beautifully this accords with the promise of Christ to his disciples before he left the earth, and how prompt was this fulfillment after he had ascended on high.

5. But this great gift was not to be limited to a narrow circle. Lest the Jews in their ignorance and prejudice should



appropriate this great blessing to themselves, God breaks down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and bestows this supreme favor also upon the Gentile world. The house of Cornelius is the chosen place, and Peter again God's chosen instrument to announce unto the Gentiles repentance unto life. Here again the same marvelous signs, at least in part, attended the outpouring of the Spirit that were present on Pentecost. Peter afterward, in giving a history of the case, declared: "The Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning."

6. The signs that accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit on the two occasions have led some to the conclusion that the impartation of miraculous power was the whole purpose of this outpouring, and that the whole blessing is exhausted in the bestowment of these special gifts. Can this be true? If so, in what sense was this outpouring a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy which was to take place in the last days? Miraculous endowments had been abundant, both before and after Joel's time, and were especially so during the personal ministry of Christ. If the miraculous endowment exhausts this whole blessing, in what sense was it a new visitation? How could the Spirit be said to have come now, for the first time, if it were simply for the purpose of miraculous endowment? How could that constitute an epoch which was but the repetition in substance, with perhaps some variations in manifestation, of that which had repeatedly taken place in all ages? How could Jesus say, "If I go not away the Spirit will not come, but if I go away I will send him unto you," if this bestowment of the Spirit were the same in kind that they had previously enjoyed?

Is it not reasonable to look upon these signs as merely confirmatory of a new spiritual presence that came in fulfillment of prophecy, and of the promise of Christ, constituting the crowning blessing of the new institution, and which very

appropriately manifests itself as the portion of the believer on the birthday of the church? How reasonable it seems that the promised Spirit, having come to dwell in the heart, should manifest its presence by outward and visible signs which were but temporary and destined to pass away without in any way affecting the enjoyment of the permanent abiding gift. If it be asked why miraculous signs on this occasion are taken as confirmatory of a new spiritual presence, while miraculous manifestations that occurred previous to this time, are not confirmatory of any such presence, I answer, that miraculous signs are always confirmatory of the thing for the establishment of which they were wrought. If wrought in attestation of some special claim, or mission, they establish that claim, or mission, and not something else. Moses' miracles establish his peculiar claims, but not the claims of some other person, or the fulfillment of some promise in no way connected with his office or work. Christ's miracles establish his claims, but not the fulfillment of a promise which he distinctly says could not be fulfilled while he lived on earth. In this case the signs verify the fulfillment of the promise of Christ concerning the gift of the Spirit. Peter evidently so understood the matter, for he said (referring to Christ): "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye see and hear." Evidently the visible and audible signs were confirmatory in Peter's mind of the promised spiritual visitation. That Peter connected this spiritual endowment with the promise of Christ is shown by the fact that he expressly declares it to have been shed forth by him. Now when we remember that this promise of Christ could not be referred simply to miraculous spiritual endowment, nor could it have been limited simply to the apostles, for he said it should abide forever, thus becoming a blessing for all generations, we ought to grasp the entirety of this case. First the apostles, and

possibly the one hundred and twenty, were put into the enjoyment of the Holy Spirit according to Christ's promise, and this fact was miraculously attested by signs. Then since the promise was not confined to them, but was intended for all believers under the new dispensation, Peter preached the gospel, reiterating Christ's promise of the gift of the Spirit, and naming the conditions upon which it could be enjoyed. A large number believed and obeyed, and doubtless came into possession of the same gift which the apostles, or the one hundred and twenty, as the case may be, had just received. In the latter case, miraculous signs were, no doubt, wanting, since there was no use for them, the fulfillment of the promise having been already verified by signs just witnessed. For the same reason no one should expect miraculous signs at the present time, since a reconfirmation of Christ's promise is unnecessary, and would not make it more sure. When a case has been decided in court, people years afterward do not call up the original witnesses, but go to the record. So here the witness has been given, and it is a matter of record.

That these miraculous signs witnessed on Pentecost served other purposes in addition to the confirmation of Christ's promise, I do not doubt. In the very nature of the case this would be true. They served to attract attention, to draw the people together, to invest the apostles with dignity and authority, in the eyes of the multitude, and by their special character to qualify the apostles to speak with tongues; but this fact in no way contravenes the notion that they indicated the presence in the heart of the Paraclete or Comforter, which now, for the first time, was enjoyed by men.

It may be well to notice a certain materialistic tendency manifested by some in dealing with this question. (1) The question of *how* greatly troubles persons of a certain mental type. They stagger at this promise of Christ concerning the

indwelling of the Comforter, and try in various ways to explain it away. How, says one, can the Holy Spirit dwell in a human being? How can it be present in all believers at the same time? Why does it not give some sensible evidence of its presence? Such persons are manifestly demanding that spiritual phenomena shall be subject to purely sensuous tests. This is manifestly impossible, and persons who insist on applying sensuous tests by this very process exclude from the account all spiritual facts and phenomena. Their method disqualifies them from understanding this subject, and consequently from passing judgment upon it. (2) Other expounders press into service the following figurative language of Christ: "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life." And from this they deduce the doctrine that the Spirit is equivalent to the word. Hence, in this view, to have the Spirit means simply to have or to remember the word. How utterly destitute of foundation such a theory is, a single quotation from Christ's language will show. In referring to the Spirit he says: "Whom the world can not receive." But can not the world receive the word, and did not Christ commission his disciples to preach to the world? Paul said: "The sword of the Spirit is the word of God." This theory makes no distinction between the agent, or author, and the instrument, confounding the one with the other. (3) It should also be noted that the same tests that some insist upon applying to the question of the Holy Spirit, would lead to the denial of the existence of the human spirit, and even rob God of his attributes. How, we might ask, can the human spirit dwell in the human body? What connection can it have with material things? How can God be omnipresent? Thus it will be seen that there is no stopping place for him who denies the possibility of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit this side of bald materialism.

We must now hasten to consider very briefly,—

**V. To whom the Spirit is given and on what conditions.**

On this point the Scriptures are most explicit. We learn from the language of Christ,—

1. That he is not given to the world. “I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth whom the world can not receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him.” On the other hand,—

2. The Spirit is given to believers. “He that believeth on me as the Scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of water.” “But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive.” This makes it clear that believers receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul bears testimony to the same effect. In writing to the Ephesians, he says: “In whom having also believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” These scriptures are so clear that comment is unnecessary. We also learn,—

3. That obedience is a condition of reception. In his speech before the council, Peter, in the course of his remarks, said: “And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, which God hath given to them that obey him.” On Pentecost he said: “Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” In both passages obedience is made a condition of the reception of the Spirit. In another passage, from the language of Christ we find,—

4. That the Spirit is promised on the condition of prayer. “If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.” This, of course, perfectly harmonizes with the other conditions, since no unbeliever or disobedient person would offer such a prayer. One other

passage should be taken into account, in which this most precious gift is represented,—

5. As a matter of Divine favor and mercy.

Paul, in writing to Titus, says: "For when the kindness of God our Saviour and his love toward man appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy, he saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." The gift of the Holy Spirit is thus made the crowning blessing in God's system of grace and mercy.

Not only is the gift of the Spirit a matter of grace, but the whole question of salvation rests finally on the favor and love of God.

It may give us a clearer understanding of this subject, and relieve us from some misapprehensions to consider,—

**VI. Source of the gift and manner of its impartation.**

We have already learned from the language of John that,—

1. Christ alone could administer the baptism of the Spirit. John could baptize in water, Christ commissioned his disciples to baptize in water, but to no man was granted the power of administering the baptism of the Spirit. May not this fact serve to explain why Jesus did not baptize in water, since that was a function that could be imparted to men, while the other and higher baptism could not? At least it may be said that this beautifully accords with the Divine method everywhere manifest, and nowhere more strikingly so than in the dispensation of Christ. God does for man what he can not do for himself. It is so in nature, and it would seem to be the rule adopted in the system of grace. Man could not atone for sin, so Christ does it for him; but having accomplished the facts of the gospel, he does not remain on earth to preach this gospel, or to baptize, but commissions men to do this work,

and he seems to be very careful not to interfere in this work. He would not preach to Paul, but sent him to the human agent, Ananias. He would not preach to the eunuch, but sent Philip to do it. He would not allow an angel to preach to Cornelius, but directed him to send for Peter. In harmony with this principle, if men were to be baptized in water his disciples might do it, but when the Spirit was to be given, Christ was the agent in its impartation. It may be thought that because the Spirit was in some instances conferred through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, that the gift of the Spirit was not therefore the exclusive prerogative of Christ; but it should be borne in mind that this work was accomplished by the apostles as mediate and not as immediate agents. The apostles might pray and lay their hands on those who were proper subjects to receive the Holy Spirit, but it was not within their power to give the Spirit. It had to be sent by Christ, or by God in Christ's name. It was a great dignity to be associated even in this secondary way in the bestowment of this gift, but it was an honor conferred on the apostles and on a very few especially chosen individuals.

2. It is also clear that the Spirit is given in different measures. It is said of Christ, that the Spirit was granted to him without measure. This language suggests such a thing as granting the Spirit by measure; and if so, why not in different measures? May it not also be true that it is possible to possess a fuller measure of the Spirit at one time than at another? Nay, more; is there not danger of losing this most precious gift? Does not the apostle warn us against this very danger when he says: "Quench not the Spirit." On the other hand, may we not enjoy this blessing in ever-increasing measure as we may prepare our hearts for its reception, and as our necessities may demand?

3. The figures used in describing the gift indicate both its source and the manner of bestowing it.

(1) It is called a baptism. God himself said to John: "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth in the Holy Spirit." God here calls the impartation a baptism, and John accordingly says: "There cometh one after me whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire."

(2) It is called an outpouring. The prophet in foretelling of the impartation of the Spirit says: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." Peter sees the fulfillment of this on Pentecost. Also, Paul says: "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit which he poured out on us abundantly." This passage certainly refers to the ordinary gift of the Spirit which is promised to believers, and is therefore descriptive of the impartation.

(3) It is called a drinking. We recur again to a passage quoted. Jesus said: "If any man thirst let him come to me and drink." John says this he spake of the Spirit which they that believe should receive. Paul also says: "We have all been made to drink of one Spirit." We thus have the impartation described under these bold metaphors: A baptism, an outpouring, a drinking. May not all of these metaphors with propriety be used according as we take one view or another of the subject? Contemplating God's part in the giving, how beautifully the words "pour out" express both the abundant measure of the Spirit, and the willingness of God to give. "I will pour out my Spirit." God's act in giving is thus expressed. "Which he poured out on us abundantly." Again the same act described. "Let him come unto me and drink." The human act in receiving is described. "He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit." Both the Divine act and the human condition as being completely under its influence are expressed in this figure. It would seem, therefore, that the different symbols are not used to indicate diversity in the gift, or in its effects,



but rather to indicate the action, or condition, of the different parties in the transaction.\*

We next pass to the consideration of,—

#### VII. The work of the Spirit as it relates to the sinner.

In order to anything like a just conception of this branch of the subject we must clearly discriminate between the work of the Spirit in the conversion of sinners, and the gift of the Spirit promised to the believer. A failure to make such discrimination necessarily leads to serious error. By confounding things radically different, theories have sprung up that if pressed to their logical conclusions would make void the preaching of the gospel.

1. The sinner is taught that conversion is accomplished by a direct and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Neither faith, nor repentance, nor obedience is possible until this takes place. For this the sinner must wait, and for this he is taught to labor and pray. The coming of the Spirit is supposed to be evidenced by certain emotions, or feelings, or strange, startling, and miraculous experiences which give evidence of pardon and acceptance with God. Such a theory pressed to its logical results leaves no room for the preaching of the gospel, and utterly destroys human responsibility. By it man is entirely passive in conversion, and the responsibility for his salvation rests wholly with God. This theory is based on the dogma of total depravity, according to which the sinner is so dead that he can not believe, repent, or perform any acceptable act of obedience until he is immediately quickened by God's Holy Spirit. Accordingly conversion is not regarded as process, but as a sudden transformation, accomplished solely by God.

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\*I am aware that this position as to the baptism of the Spirit does not harmonize with the views expressed by some of my brethren for whom I have a profound respect, but I also know that I stand with others of equal ability and piety, among whom may be mentioned the sainted Richardson; and to my mind, the position is reasonable and Scriptural.

2. This presents a most striking contrast to the orderly, natural, and logical process of conversion as it is revealed under the apostolic ministry. We have no example of an apostle of Christ praying for an audience of unbelievers to be converted by an immediate operation of the Spirit, nor do we have an intimation in apostolic preaching that faith and repentance result from such operation. In all records of the apostles' work there is not a single example of a sinner seeking pardon, yet unable to find it, nor of an apostle demanding an experience as evidence of pardon. The theory that makes conversion the result of an irresistible and overwhelming influence of the Holy Spirit, has not the shadow of support in either the preaching or practice of the apostles. But let there be no misunderstanding at this point. That the conversion of sinners is accomplished through the agency of the Spirit is freely admitted. The apostles went out in the power of the Spirit, "to turn men from darkness to the light, and from the power of Satan unto God," and their work was emphatically the work of the Spirit. That the Holy Spirit imparts faith and gives repentance, and in short accomplishes the conversion of the sinner, are matters about which there is no dispute.

The important question is, Does the Holy Spirit act immediately on the heart in order to conversion, or does it use means, agencies, and instrumentalities? On this point the Scriptures give no uncertain sound. Jesus said to his disciples, when about to leave them (John xiv. 16, 17), "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth whom the world can not receive, for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: Ye know him for he abideth with you and shall be in you." From this passage it is perfectly clear that the Holy Spirit does not accomplish the conversion of the sinner by an immediate operation, for Jesus distinctly says: "Whom the world can not receive." To pray for God to

pour out his Spirit upon the unconverted, in order to their conversion, is to pray for that which Jesus says is impossible.

3. Jesus not only declares the inability of the world to receive the Spirit, but he gives us a positive statement as to the work the Spirit accomplishes for the world. "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I go I will send him unto you, and when he is come he will convict the world in respect of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believed not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John xvi. 7-11).

(1) This doubtless is intended as a comprehensive statement of the Spirit's work as it relates to the world at large, and it is seen to embrace simply three items; the first being to convict the world of sin. To guard us against the mistake of supposing that sin in general is meant, Christ adds: "Of sin because they believe not on me." This limits the application of the passage to the specific sin of rejecting the Christ in his office as the world's Saviour. It was the office of the Spirit to show the world that Jesus was the true Messiah, and that in rejecting him the world was guilty. This was done in the beginning through the preaching of the apostles, and it is accomplished now through the agency of preaching.

(2) The second item in the Spirit's work is to convince the world of righteousness. Here again we have Christ's own explanation. It was not the righteousness of the world, nor any portion of the world, but of Christ, "Of righteousness, because I go to the Father." The Jewish Sanhedrin had set in judgment on Christ, and condemned him for unrighteousness. He was declared to be a blasphemer. Christ carried his case to the highest court in the universe, and by the coming of the Spirit in accordance with his promise, his acceptance with God is declared, and his righteousness made manifest.

(3) The third part of the Holy Spirit's work in behalf of the world was to convince it of judgment, and here again Christ guards us against misunderstanding: "Of judgment, because the prince of the world is judged." It is not the judgment of the world, nor of wicked men, but of Satan, the prince of this world. Christ, in his death, grappled with Satan, and wrenched the keys of death from his grasp. The conqueror is at last conquered, and his final judgment has commenced. By the coming of the Spirit, Christ's complete and lasting victory is fully guaranteed, and the final overthrow of the powers of darkness made sure. Now the world is called upon to transfer its allegiance to a new sovereign through the proclamation of the gospel. The beginning of the end has come. From henceforth Satan's kingdom shall decline until the final overthrow, and the kingdom of Christ shall increase in strength and power until its final victory. Then shall the kingdom be delivered up to God the Father, and the Son himself become subject, that God may be all in all.

4. The way is now open for a clear understanding of how the Spirit accomplishes his work. After Jesus had given his commission, he said: "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." After seven days of waiting, the Spirit came in accordance with Christ's promise, and the apostles were fully equipped for their work. Immediately Peter stood up, and under the direction of the Spirit began to preach, pointing out to the assembled multitude the sin they had incurred in rejecting Christ. Conviction was thus produced in the minds of many by the Holy Spirit, speaking by the mouth of the Apostle Peter. When the convicted ones cried out, "What shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." It would, therefore, be in perfect harmony with Scripture teaching, and apostolic example, to preach the

gospel to men to make them believers, and to promise to the believer the gift of the Holy Spirit on condition of repentance and baptism. This is the beautiful, simple, and logical process foreshadowed in Christ's commission, and clearly revealed on Pentecost; hence, says Peter: "God has chosen that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the words of the gospel and believe." Peter never spent time in praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the unconverted, and telling men they could do nothing until they were regenerated by an immediate operation of the Spirit, but he preached the gospel, and as a part of this gospel promised the gift of the Spirit to the obedient, penitent believer. In perfect harmony with this are the teachings of Paul (Rom. x. 14-17), "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things; but they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith: 'Lord, who hath believed our report?' So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 14-17). "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i. 16). The writer of Hebrews says: "For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of both joints and marrow, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12).

We therefore conclude that the work of the Holy Spirit, as it relates to the sinner, is to impart faith, give repentance, lead to obedience, all of which is accomplished mediately through the preaching of the gospel, after which it has another work to perform for the Christian, as we have already seen.

In our last division of this most important subject, we have reserved for consideration,—

**VIII. The blessing following from this indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart.**

We have already seen that,—

1. The Comforter was to take the place of Christ's bodily presence. This does not mean that Christ has gone—that we no longer have him. It simply means that as a person clothed in flesh he has gone, but that as a spiritual presence he is with us still; that he and the Father dwell in us by the Spirit which he hath given us. It is the realization of that gracious promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Instead of troubling our minds about the physical or intellectual mystery that this question presents, we should rest our hearts in this assurance, and rejoice in the realization of this promise. What more comforting assurance than this? Let me feel that by this indwelling Spirit Jesus is with me—that I am never alone, nor shall I ever be so long as this body remains the temple of the Holy Spirit. The chiefest among the ten thousands, and the one altogether lovely, the Nazarene, the crucified One, the risen and exalted Redeemer, is with me as my ever-present companion and sympathizing friend.

2. Another great blessing which should never for a moment be lost sight of is the fact that the Spirit by its indwelling presence becomes a necessary and effective agent in the development of Christian life and character. There are some who contend that teaching and example are all that is needed to effect transformation of life and character. If this be true the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart must be regarded rather as a spiritual luxury than as a necessity. If true Christian life and character can be secured through the influence of teaching and example alone, the great end of existence will have been attained: Does not the history of Christ's own

apostles disprove this theory? To what marvelous lessons these men had listened, what warnings, what admonitions had been given them! Had they not listened to the teachings of him who spake as never man spake? Had not the example of a perfect life been constantly before them for years? But yet all this had come far short of producing in them the ideal character. After all this rich experience, Peter could deny his Lord with oaths and curses, and all could desert the Master in cowardly fear. But after Pentecost behold what a change! What a transformation is seen! Great as was the teaching, great as was the life of Christ, something more was needed to secure the highest results. This needed power came on Pentecost, and behold the result. No longer do we see vacillation, doubt, and cowardly fear; but, on the contrary, sublime faith that never faltered. Let no one, however, be led to undervalue the sacred word of God. Do not for one moment believe, as some have taught, that it is a dead letter, powerless until vitalized by some immediate operation of God's Spirit. This theory discredits the words of the apostle declaring that it "is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword." Let no one forget that the word of God is the sword of the Spirit, and that as such it is a most effective weapon. Through the word the Spirit operates, as we have seen, in the conversion of sinners. It must be preached, it must be believed; but in the perfection of the true Christian character, in producing the fruits of Christian life, this very record teaches that another agent is operative aside from precept and example. "According to his mercy he saves by the washing of generations and renewing of the Holy Spirit." Does not this consideration give new significance to Christ's words, "It is expedient for you that I go away"? Why expedient, if precept and example alone could accomplish the highest ends? That something must be added to enlightenment is also shown by the following impressive and forcible language: "It is

impossible for those who were once enlightened [this is the result of teaching by both precept and example, but something more is to follow], and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come, and if they fall away to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame" (Heb. vi. 4-6). Even enlightenment, together with the gift of the Spirit, may fail, for the possibility of falling away is suggested in this passage. Much more enlightenment without the gift would be likely to fail.

3. We also learn from God's word that the Spirit is an inner witness of our sonship. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God," says Paul. Can one reasonably suppose that Paul meant that this witness of the Spirit was the written word, or even the spoken word, of the apostles, laying down the conditions of pardon? Suppose we try to place ourselves in the position of the Romans to whom Paul wrote, having no written word or document of any kind on the subject of Christianity, what could we possibly understand by such language other than that the Spirit is an inner witness of sonship? In fact, it seems scarcely possible to doubt that Paul used the demonstrative pronoun, translated "himself," to designate the personal spirit. If he intended them to understand by this phrase "Spirit himself," simply the word inspired by the Spirit, he certainly took a most unaccountable way to communicate that idea. Furthermore, if the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart, why may it not bear witness? To deny the possibility of witness is really to deny the possibility of the indwelling presence. John says: "Hereby we know that he [Christ] abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us." Also: "Hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us because he hath given us of his



Spirit." The knowing here referred to is the result of the indwelling, hence by his presence in the heart the Spirit becomes to us a witness.

4. We also learn that the indwelling of the Spirit transforms men into moral heroes. This fact is strikingly illustrated in the case of the apostles already referred to. Never was there a greater change witnessed in men than that seen in the apostles after Pentecost. "Tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." What was this power? The ability to work miracles? But they had enjoyed this before. To speak with tongues? But this is simply one form of miraculous endowment, and why the necessity of waiting for this kind of endowment which before had been given? If they had lost it, why could it not then be restored? The fact that a new kind of spiritual presence was soon to be given explains all. The Holy Spirit was about to take its abode in the hearts of believers, but the time had not yet come. Christ was not yet glorified. Hence they were to tarry till this new gift should be sent, which would endue them with power, not simply to work miracles, but with a power that would transform them into moral heroes. Hence we find that Peter, who a short time before denied his Lord in a weak and cowardly manner, now stands up bold as a lion, and charges Christ's murderers with their crime. When endued with this power, this weak and vascillating disciple became the grandest ambassador that ever went forth on a mission. These men, who so recently had shown great timidity, at once became bold, aggressive champions of truth, "unabashed in the presence of kings, and undaunted in the presence of death." This wonderful change in the apostles stands out as one of the most marvelous things witnessed among the phenomena of Pentecost. These same effects have ever followed the indwelling of the Spirit. How calmly Stephen met his death. When his persecutors gnashed on him with their teeth, and were preparing to stone him,

"He being full of the Holy Spirit looked up steadfastly into heaven, and said, I see Jesus standing on the right hand of God." And while the stones were being hurled upon him he said: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, and having said this he fell asleep." It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that this is the mysterious power that has in all ages sustained the Christian martyrs, and enabled them to rejoice even amidst the flames. This is the power that yet enables the Christian calmly to meet death, and who shall say that in this trying hour bright visions do not come even as they came to the martyr Stephen. Truly in the gift of the Spirit the climax of blessing is reached. The Divine and the human are wedded. Man is made a partaker of the Divine nature, and God's great plan of saving man is realized.

We can conclude this chapter in no better way than by referring to the fruit of the Spirit as mentioned by the Apostle Paul in such richness and abundance:

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRIST-LIKENESS.

**Introduction:** 1. The development of true character is the great aim of the gospel of Christ. God's purpose is to save men from their sins, and not in their sins. He proposes not simply to free men from the guilt and consequences of sin, but to destroy the love of sin, and prepare the individual for the society of unfallen spirits by developing in him all that is noble, pure, and good. Salvation is, therefore, first of all subjective. The kingdom is within as well as without. The individual must be saved *here* before he can be saved *hereafter*.

2. These considerations make it clear that salvation, in a most important sense, is progressive. It is a matter of growth or development; consequently John says: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." I take this to mean that the full salvation is not reached at once. There is enlargement, growth, development. It is a small view of this great question that makes it a mere matter of place, or outward environment, or even of certain fixed and definite steps that bring the individual to a certain place where pardon is bestowed. While there may be, and are, certain definite steps eventuating in pardon, which is in a sense salvation, yet in a much larger and fuller sense salvation comes afterward, and consists of a growth into the Divine image and likeness. Consequently, a man may be saved every day; that is, he may attain unto a larger salvation; he may come nearer and nearer unto the Divine ideal, and this, in fact, is the great purpose of God as it is being realized in his appointments of grace.

3. The possibilities that God sets before every man are such as to thrill the heart and fire the soul. To be a man in the Divine sense means to be a being truly but little lower than the angels. It means to be a being of pure heart, noble purposes, lofty desires, holy ambitions. It means to be a being so enlarged in all his capacities, states, and desires, that all littleness and narrowness has been lost, and all prejudice destroyed. It means to be one from whom all race and class feelings have been eradicated—one who, standing on the broad plane of a common humanity, can take every man by the hand, be he black or white, rich or poor, cultivated or rude, and say as his heart throbs with the impulse of universal kinship, "My brother." Such a blessed consummation as is thus presented means that it is possible for us to climb the golden ladder, let down from heaven, until at last we stand on that plane where God and the angels dwell, and see not as now "through a glass darkly," but see in God's clear sunlight, and "know as we are known." Truly, in view of our wonderful possibilities, it is a great thing to be a man.

In our study of this soul-thrilling subject, we are naturally led to consider,—

#### **I. The active principle at work in the development of the Divine Ideal—the Perfect Man.**

1. In all growth there is an active principle at work that produces the invisible result. In plants and animals, the life principle—vegetable in the one case, and animal in the other—operates to produce the proper development of the organism. What this in essence is, has so far eluded the search of the most painstaking investigator; but this in no way contravenes the fact of its existence. The principle of life exists, and it operates to produce growth, or development, under certain necessary conditions, and the fully developed individual is the product of this principle.

2. Likewise there is a principle operative in the development of character, under the influence of which development proceeds, and without which there is no growth. This principle seems to be immediately (not remotely) that of imitation. Character is formed, not because the individual has abstractedly apprehended certain ethical principles, but because those principles have been presented in the concrete as a model for imitation. The fact of incarnation is, consequently, fundamental and far-reaching. A truth may be interesting and important in the abstract, but to have power it must be incarnated. In fact, we probably never comprehend the abstract until we have seen its concrete embodiment. We know what love and sympathy are when we see them incarnated—when they are shown forth in the actions of a loving, sympathetic man or woman. Wendell Phillips said: "Put a great moral idea on two feet and start it across the continent, and it will be just as certain to revolutionize the continent as if in order to blow up the capitol you should place gunpowder beneath the Senate chamber." Wendell Phillips was himself an illustration of the doctrine he uttered. He was the embodiment of a principle, and the principle manifested wonderful power because it was embodied. All principles, whether true or false, obtain dynamic energy by incarnation. A doctrine that is held as a mere abstraction has little power with men.

3. All this is perhaps more fully explained if we consider that man seems to be very largely an imitative being. This propensity manifests itself in early life. The child is first of all an imitator. It tries to do everything it sees done. It busies itself in copying activities of older people, and in this it finds great delight. This principle so strong in the child is never lost. We pattern after our ideals, and become what we are largely on the principle of imitation. If our ideals are good and worthy, we become correspondingly good and noble; if they are low and groveling, we become correspondingly debased.

4. God has recognized this truth in a most practical way in the development of his plan of salvation. It is said of Christ that "His life was the light of man." The only vision of God that can truly bless man is a vision of God incarnate. This meets the constitutional demands of the soul. This invests the God idea with dynamic energy by making God a model, or pattern, for human imitation. Christianity is not a philosophy, or a system of ethics. It aims at the development of a true character by presenting to man a perfect model for imitation. A distinguished writer has truly said that in a philosophical system the system itself is everything, the personality of the author nothing, but that in the Christian system, the personality of the founder is everything. Jesus Christ is, therefore, unique, not only in his personality, but in his method. In his system he has embodied a principle that finds its explanation only in the profoundest and most comprehensive understanding of the human soul, and the most accurate knowledge of its deepest wants. Truly it was said of him, "He knew what was in man."

5. But let us not make the mistake of supposing that we have in this principle grasped the fundamental thing. It is not simply a question of deciding upon a model, even if we decide upon the right model, and then of calmly making up our minds to reproduce that model. Human character is not the result of any such cold and heartless process. Man does not pattern after a model simply because he determines in a cold, intellectual way to do so. We imitate that which we admire or love. The heart is involved in a most radical sense. When Jesus was asked what the first and great commandment was, he did not say, Choose the right model and reproduce it, but he said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy might and mind and strength." Why is this love demanded, if the highest character, and consequently the highest good, can be secured by copying a perfect pattern? Jesus was too

radical a teacher to omit the fundamental thing. He knew that men would neither choose the model nor pattern after it without love for the model, and, therefore, he pointed at once to the fundamental thing. We consequently see why God presents himself to us in aspects to win our love. Therefore,—

“Love is the golden chain that binds  
Our happy souls above;  
And he's an heir of heaven that finds  
His bosom glow with love.”

Here we reach the bed-rock upon which is reared the structure of a true and noble character.

This naturally leads us to consider at greater length,—

## II. The true model for development of the Perfect Man.

1. Man, in his search for the highest good, has generally followed along one of three lines. He has been ambitious for power, and the man of power has been his ideal; or he has been greedy for riches, and the man of wealth has been his model; or he has coveted knowledge or wisdom, and the man of wisdom has seemed to him to hold the highest place. True, some have found their glory in meaner and baser things, but in the main the paths of men have followed the three directions indicated.

2. We reach, however, a different result when we search the Scriptures for a Divine model. (1) Paul said: “But we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of our Lord” (II. Cor. iii. 18). In this passage God’s glory is presented as an image into which we are changed. Here we have suggested, not only the idea of imitation, which we have just elaborated, but also the true image, or model, is mentioned. It is called “the glory of the Lord.” If we can discover the meaning of this we have found the true model for character building. (2) Moses

requested God to show him his glory. God's answer is suggestive. "Behold," he saith, "I will make my goodness to pass before thee." Why did not God say: I will make my power, or wisdom, or riches pass before thee? Because God has neither power, nor riches, nor wisdom? Certainly not. He is infinite in all these. Because he despises these things? Surely not. He doubtless considers all of them great. He evidently proceeds at once to the fundamental thing. "Behold I will make my goodness to pass before thee." God's glory lies in his philanthropy, his goodness. God is powerful, not that power is an end, but because it is a means to an end. It contributes to his goodness. 'The same may be said of his riches and his wisdom. All are great, not as ends, but as contributing to the highest end, which is goodness.

3. But, as we have seen, abstractions have but little power. The concrete form is the active dynamic form. Hence God incarnated his goodness. Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh. Consequently the writer of Hebrews said of him: "Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sin, sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high." Here is God's way of presenting his glory to man. He embodied it in the form of a man, who was the effulgence of that glory. With this idea in mind, Paul's language becomes clear. "We beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image." Jesus Christ is therefore the Divine model for the development of a true character. He is the incarnation of God's glory (goodness), and consequently a perfect pattern for imitation. We reach the highest character, not because we intellectually apprehend certain true doctrines, or ethical principles, but because our hearts have been filled with the love of God as he reveals himself in the lovely person and character of Jesus Christ, and making him our model we grow up into him in



whom "dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead." To insure the accomplishment of this most beneficent result, God gives us his Holy Spirit to dwell within us, and consequently the blessed results of Christian life are said to be the fruits of the Spirit.

This naturally leads us to consider,—

### **III. The necessary conditions for the development of the Perfect Man.**

I. The passage from Paul, already quoted, indicates that the development is a gradual process. "We are changed into the same image from glory to glory"; that is, from one degree of goodness to another. There is good, better, and best, and the time element necessarily enters into this progressive unfolding from good to better, and from better to best. Nor is this at all peculiar to Christianity. All true and solid growth is a gradual process. In the vegetable world those forms of life that develop quickly are comparatively transient. Quick growth means lack of solidity and speedy death. A mushroom will grow in a night and die in a day, while an oak tree requires a century for its development, but it has strength and stability, and is not only a thing of beauty, but of great utility. The same truth finds illustration in the development of the physical body. The boy who grows up rapidly is not as strong and robust as the boy who grows more slowly. When we pass upward into the intellectual and spiritual realms we find that the same law holds good, and receives even more emphatic confirmation. True, healthy intellectual development requires time, and any system of education that does not recognize this fact, and make allowance for the time element, is a delusion and a snare. Schools that advocate short-cut methods and patent processes for intellectual training and development, are frauds, and deserve the contempt of all right-minded persons. The young are peculiarly liable to be imposed upon

by this educational quackery. Youth is naturally impulsive and impatient under restraint. A year looks like an eternity to a young person, and many seek to avoid the slow and tedious process of true growth by resorting to short cuts, and in this way they make mistakes that never can be corrected. Solid, healthy, sturdy intellectual development is a slow process under any and all systems of education. It can not be hastened beyond a certain degree of progress, differing somewhat in different individuals. Wherever the time element appears to be in large measure eliminated, we may rest assured that the education itself has been, to a considerable extent, eliminated. In the spiritual domain, we meet with no exceptions. A well-developed Christian man is not the product of an instantaneous operation of Divine grace and power. Christian character is a growth; hence says Peter: "As new-born babes long for the spiritual milk which is without guile that you may grow thereby unto salvation." This language was addressed to Christians, called in the first verse of the epistle "elect," and yet there was a salvation to which they had not attained, and which was to be reached by a process of growth. Just here church officers sometimes make a serious mistake. The time element is not taken into consideration. As much is expected of the individual the next day after he enters the church as if he had been a member of the church for many years. If he makes mistakes, as little excuse is made for him as there would be for the oldest member of the congregation, and sometimes the exactions seem to be even more severe, and the lines appear to be more rigidly drawn. All this is wrong. It violates the law of common sense as well as the law of God. Give time for growth, and do not expect impossibilities. Beyond doubt a time may come when the individual may merit the severest condemnation, when for instance he has had ample time and opportunity for growth, and still continues weak—a mere babe in strength and knowledge; but until

there has been a time for growth, patience and forbearance should be exercised.

2. The second condition of growth is appropriation. No organism can grow without food, and healthy, vigorous growth demands food of the proper kind, and in sufficient amount. In the material realm this is so well understood that it seems superfluous to mention it, but the law holds good in the higher domain. The mind, in order to its healthy development, must be properly fed. It will starve without food, just as surely as would the body. Many an one seriously injures his intellectual powers by neglecting to take the proper amount and kind of food. The mind feeds upon everything taken into it. If the food be healthful, the mind is made strong; if otherwise, the mind is weakened. It is a serious question as to what shall be our intellectual food. The mind may be poisoned just as surely as may the body. To read some kinds of books, listen to some kinds of speeches, associate with some kinds of persons, is not only extremely dangerous, but in many cases absolutely fatal. This law is abundantly illustrated in the spiritual realm. The spiritual man demands food just as imperatively as does the physical or intellectual nature. The church of Jesus Christ is a great bread-house. It is a place for feeding hungry souls that thereby healthy growth may be produced. God's provision is ample; but to neglect it is to insure spiritual decay. The reading of God's Word, prayer, the exhortations of God's people, the preaching of the gospel, and the Lord's Supper are means provided by God for the sustenance of the spiritual nature. The soul grows in proportion to the use made of these divine provisions, and withers and decays in the measure that they are neglected. No one can become strong spiritually who habitually absents himself from the house of God, and thus neglects the divinely appointed means of growth. Apostasy has its beginning in a neglect to attend to this most important duty of appropriation.

The writer of Hebrew says: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" The Christian man may just as surely neglect the "Great Salvation" by neglecting to use the spiritual food, as may the sinner by neglecting to accept Christ. In either case the neglect is fatal.

3. There is at least one remaining condition of growth that may be briefly expressed by the word distribution. The eating of good food is not the only condition of healthy growth, even though ample time be given for the process. A vigorous, strong body can not be produced by merely eating, no matter how much time be allowed for its development. Healthy growth demands as an invariable condition that for everything received a full equivalent be returned. Receive and give is the double work demanded in order to growth. The man who eats and does not give back a full equivalent in the form of work, or exercise, becomes dyspeptic. Nature rebels at any such one-sided process. These laws that operate so continuously, and surely, in the physical realm, operate with equal certainty in the intellectual and spiritual worlds. A strong mind can not be developed by the filling up process. Just at this point a serious mistake is often made in the matter of education. Many get the idea that education consists in gathering facts, in obtaining knowledge, in gaining information. Many a man gathers many facts, obtains much knowledge, gains much information, who is in no sense educated. Education means culture, training, discipline. It means the acquisition of power, and this result can never be reached by mere appropriation. The true educational method is the double process of receiving and giving. The true educator demands of the student *quid pro quo*. He requires him to return a fair equivalent for everything he receives. He does not look upon the student as an empty vessel to be filled up, but rather as an aggregation of latent powers and possibilities to be developed. The lecture method of education is a conspicuous

failure, except in the most advanced stages of the educational process. Before it can be used with profit there must have come the discipline of the mental powers which can only be secured through exercise. All attempts to educate the untrained, undeveloped student by the filling up process can not be too severely condemned. The attempt to make doctors, lawyers, preachers, specialists of any kind by taking untrained and undisciplined young people and giving to them the lines of work that belong to their chosen specialty, is a ridiculous farce; nay, worse, it is a grievous sin against honest and unsuspecting young people who thus become victims of a pernicious system. Education should always precede specialization, and education can not be secured by the one-sided process of appropriation.

Healthy spiritual development offers a strong confirmation of this general truth. Distribution, or, in other words, exercise, is a necessary and invariable condition of spiritual growth. Just here is where many preachers fail. They imagine their work done when they have faithfully prepared and delivered a definite number of sermons, and have made the required number of pastoral calls. It is possible to kill a church by over-feeding and under-working its members. Good, wholesome spiritual food demands a corresponding amount of exercise in order to insure healthy growth. The church is full of spiritual dyspeptics—persons who have had too much to eat spiritually, and not enough to do. The peevish, fault-finding church members (I do not say Christians) are, in most cases, the idlers. A working Christian (who is the real Christian) is seldom a complainer. The preacher who can so arrange his forces that every member of the church has a liberal amount of work to do, is usually the successful man. The Master himself was a worker in the truest sense. He declared: "The Father hitherto works, and I work." Morning, noon, and night witnessed some beneficent ministry. His whole life was filled full

of tender, helpful service. In this, as in all else, he constitutes a perfect model. He also made work the ground for high distinction. He declared the servant of all to be the greatest of all. He even proclaimed that the rewards of the future life should be awarded upon the ground of service. "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the fountain of the world: for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And then, as if to avoid any misunderstanding, and to make sure that the possibility of service be clearly comprehended, he adds by way of explanation: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even the least, ye did it unto me."

This whole subject on the human side may then be briefly summed up in three words: Time, food, exercise. Then "let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith." May we with deep, intense yearning, ardent desire, and lofty aspiration accept this hope-inspiring declaration of the Apostle John: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Let us not be satisfied with anything we have attained unto hitherto, but let us say with the Apostle Paul: "One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

## APPENDIX.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE DISTINCTIVE PLEA OF THE DISCIPLES.

**Introduction:** In the early part of the present century, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and certain others, some acting independently, others in coöperation with them, inaugurated a religious movement that has had such phenomenal growth that it may challenge the attention of every earnest student of current religious history.

It was not the purpose of the originators of this movement to form a new sect, or party, but they hoped to bring about the great end they had in view by working within the then existing denominations. Soon, however, it became apparent that this was utterly impracticable, and the movement resulted in creating a distinct and separate religious people, commonly known as "Disciples of Christ," but sometimes nicknamed "Campbellites" by their opponents.

This people hold many of the great essential Christian truths in common with the various religious denominations of the day, but they are differentiated from all others by certain peculiar teachings, which they denominate their "distinctive plea," and to which they very earnestly invite the attention of the religious world. Inasmuch as this people claim peculiar truth, and have become a distinct religious organization, thus adding one more to the number of Protestant bodies, we are led to consider, —

**I. The grounds of justification for making a distinctive plea.**

If I mistake not, the claim of distinctive truth on the part of any religious people finds ample justification in the divine method of revealing all truth. In studying God's way of giving truth to the world, we find,—

1. That it is an individual method. That is to say, every great truth is first committed to one person, or, at most, to a very few. It passes to the many through the one or the few.

This has always been true, even in those domains of truth that are discoverable without supernatural aid. All great discoveries of truth in the natural world have been made by individuals. We are indebted to some one man for the discovery of each truth that has been added to the common accumulating inheritance of the race. People in the mass may receive truth at second hand, but the first appearance of truth always comes to the one man, and, generally, during a period of isolation from the busy throng. Illustrations are abundant along this line. Newton, Kepler, Harvey, and Franklin may be mentioned as conspicuous examples of individuals to whom great truth has come, and through whom it has been transmitted to the many.

The same principle seems to hold good in the domain of supernatural revelation. God does not speak from heaven to an assembled universe, nor does he write his revelation on the sky in flaming characters. He calls aside the one man, and commits to him the Divine message of truth, and makes him the agent to declare it to the many. The Bible is full of illustrations of this method. In fact, the whole volume has been received in this way. (1) God's message to the wicked antediluvian world was given to Noah. (2) The promise of blessing to the race was given to Abraham. (3) God's law to Israel was given to Moses. (4) God's warnings and admonitions for an apostate nation were committed to the prophets,



and each prophet received his own peculiar message. (5) God's final supreme revelation came through Jesus, and Jesus completed his revelation after he left the earth through especially inspired agents.

Not only is this true in the primary revelation, but also in what may be termed the secondary revelations of the same truths. That is to say, when great truths, once given, have been overlooked, or neglected, it has been the one man who has arisen, and with trumpet voice called attention to the forgotten, or neglected, truth.

This method is specially adapted to the human capacities, needs, and desires. The fact that God has adopted it, is proof conclusive of its wisdom. Man is necessarily the best teacher of man, because, from his own experience and consciousness, he knows the powers, limitations, and weaknesses of the human mind. God, in furnishing man with the great teacher needed, incarnated himself. Men have shown an unwillingness to receive the message in any other way. When God attempted to speak directly to the assembled hosts of Israel at Sinai, the people entreated that the divine message might be given to Moses, and that through him it might come to them. This experience of Israel should teach us all to be willing to listen to God's messengers of truth.

2. That it is an economic method.

This economy appears first in the fact that God does not give supernatural revelation concerning matters discoverable by man's natural powers. The natural is always exhausted before the supernatural is called into use. If this rule seems in any case to fail in God's dealing with the elect nation, it should be borne in mind (1) that many of the items of special revelation had a typical significance, (2) that these instructions, and laws, were given to a single nation, and intended merely as a restraining influence on the life of the nation for a limited period, while certain great problems involving the blessing of

the race were being wrought out. God's dealing with this nation, in many respects, was special and extraordinary.

God is sparing of his prophets. He does not select a hundred, or a thousand, men, and give to each the same message, but he usually contents himself with declaring his message once. If he repeats it, it is because the message has been lost, or misunderstood, or neglected.

3. That it is a harmonious method.

No two truths can ever conflict. God's prophets never bring contradictory messages. Enlarge the term prophet so as to include all teachers of truth in every field of knowledge, and still the rule holds good. This is true, no matter how diverse and widely separated the fields may be.

It also follows that natural and supernatural truths will always harmonize with each other. There is no such thing as conflict between science and revelation. If there appears to be conflict, it is because we misunderstand the one or the other. All apostles of truth harmonize in their teachings, whether they labor in the same or diverse fields. This being true, it follows that there can never be any just ground for contention between those who hold great truth. War must necessarily be the result of error, or misunderstanding. If this fact were understood by all, great truths would not be compelled to fight their way into recognition, as is so often the case, and men would spare themselves the shame and ignominy of crucifying the apostles of truth.

4. That it is an opportune method.

God's gifts of truth, whether naturally or supernaturally revealed, seem always to be most opportune. They are never in advance of the wants of the age, and they are never tardy in their coming. Every great gift of truth seems to come in the fullness of time, as did the greatest of all gifts, the Saviour of men. Even in the lower domain of purely intellectual and scientific truth, this rule finds constant and uniform verification,

and in the higher spiritual fields the illustrations are many and striking. God's man always comes when he is most needed.

5. That it is a gradually pervasive method.

God never gives the truth to one man for his own sake alone. Truth should never be regarded as a mere personal possession. God gives it to the one for the sake of the many, and it is, therefore, the duty of the one to give it to the many. The man who holds great truth should never be silenced, nor should he be censured for speaking. It is a duty laid upon him by virtue of the very truth he holds.

In these important and evident truths lie ample justification for every distinctive plea embodying great truth. Truth is always first distinctive, and it continues to be distinctive for an ever-increasing number, until it comes into universal recognition. Until that time, every party, whether great or small, that holds distinctive truth, is justified in making a distinctive plea.

We next consider,—

**II. The grounds of justification for the separate organic existence of a people having a peculiar distinctive plea.**

The opinion is entertained by some that peculiar truths would more rapidly become general if those holding them would propagate them quietly, and not allow themselves to crystallize, or be driven into separate parties, and thus excite antagonism and stir up bitter feelings. That this view is erroneous is shown by the fact that all great dominant truths have, in the Divine wisdom, been temporarily committed to the keeping of some nation, race, or party, as a gift in trust for the many.

I. This truth finds ample illustration in the history of ancient nations. The student of the philosophy history discovers and points out the characteristic national and race thoughts.

Rome had in keeping a great and necessary idea that was doubtlessly divinely given to her to guard and keep until it

should become the possession of all. It was hers to magnify the thought of law, and to work out, under the impulse of this idea, a form of stable government; to so improve material conditions as to make this a practical reality.

To Greece was given the thought of wisdom. Hers was largely an intellectual conception. Her great, peculiar, and, doubtless, divinely given work was performed in the intellectual domain, and along the necessarily related lines. Paul declared that "the Greeks seek after wisdom."

To Israel was committed the wonderful and unique conception of the one true and living God, which stood in such marked contrast with the polytheistic notions of all other races and nations.

2. Modern nations furnish no less striking examples of this same truth.

France holds supreme the thought of power. She is a nation greedy of empire.

Germany magnifies the thought of wisdom. In philosophy she holds the supreme place.

England lays great emphasis upon the idea of wealth. No people are more greedy for material possessions than are the English.

The Anglo-Saxon race holds in keeping the thought of liberty.

3. This is also illustrated in the history of Protestantism.

Luther grasped the idea that the Bible is the people's book, and the supreme authority in matters of religion. Subordinate to and growing out of this was his doctrine of justification by faith. This was a most timely truth, and one that needed special emphasis at that particular period. God's man came with his message at exactly the right moment. This truth, so firmly grasped by the one man, soon came to be the possession of a party who rallied around it and held it as a sacred, divine possession.

Calvin laid hold on the idea of Divine sovereignty. This, too, was most timely. Around him a party soon gathered who became the guardians of the great truth.

Arminius declared the doctrine of the freedom of the human will, and, consequently, of human responsibility. This, too, was specially needed at that particular time.

Wesley laid emphasis upon the idea of spiritual Christianity as opposed to mere ritualistic or formal religion. This idea has characterized the movement that he inaugurated. It seems to be the peculiar treasure committed to this great people that have rallied around Wesley as their religious leader. They have laid great emphasis on the spiritual aspects of the religion of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

4. It is also true that the great central truth peculiar to any given party is not its only possession. There is a fund of Bible knowledge that is generally accepted, and then, too, each new party that arises adopts more or less of the peculiar truths that others hold, consequently there has come to be a great fund of Christian truth common to all denominations.

It generally happens, also, that there are certain subordinate truths that logically take their root in and spring out of the great central truth. These become parts of the peculiar plea, and sometimes it happens that they assume such importance, or receive such emphasis, as to obscure the central plea.

5. A party for the support of a given truth is necessary until the truth for which it stands comes into general recognition and acceptance. When this takes place, the necessity for a distinct party ceases, because it has accomplished its mission. It has then handed forward the treasure committed to it to those for whom it was intended.

This prepares us to understand,—

III. The great distinctive plea of the people known as the "Disciples of Christ," and to discover its logical place among Protestant reformatory movements.

It is very brief and very simple. *The union of the people of God is the great distinctive and central doctrine around which this people have crystallized.*

1. The logic of events demanded this plea. The Protestant world had become very much divided. Different reformers had arisen, and around each a party had gathered, attracted by the peculiar truth that was being emphasized. Each reformatory organization had come to regard its own peculiar truth, or truths, as the sum total of all essential Christian doctrine. This view of the case left no room for the discovery of other truth, and, consequently, each new party that rose was vehemently opposed by the existing organizations. By this means the religious world soon came to be an aggregation of discordant warring sects. The work of the church was paralyzed, its resources wasted, and the spiritual intercourse between believers hindered by unholy strife.

Even the truth held by each party was more or less distorted by being dragged out of its relations to other great truth and made to occupy the whole field. For example, one party, magnifying the divine sovereignty, made salvation wholly dependent on God. Another party, emphasizing human freedom, seemed to make everything depend on man. At this point the Protestant world divided into hostile camps, and the warfare was bitter and uncompromising. Good men, however, in all the parties saw the evils, and deplored them.

2. The time had come for a new truth to receive emphasis, or rather, the time demanded that emphasis be laid on an old truth that had been apparently overlooked, or forgotten. Some one must needs arise to call the people of God together, and lay emphasis on the sin of division. In harmony with all

historic precedent, the men arose to do the needed work. Thomas Campbell and his illustrious son, Alexander, gave to the world the needed truth in their plea for the union of the people of God upon the basis of simple apostolic Christianity. The Declaration and Address of 1809 was an arraignment of sectism and a plea for union. This constitutes the essence of the plea of the Disciples, and in this everything else peculiar to this people takes root.

To fail to grasp this thought is to fail utterly in comprehending this plea. This constitutes the golden cord that binds all the subordinate items of the plea into one harmonious whole. Without this thought in mind, the Disciples appear to be a company of objectors, fault-finders, destructionists, turning here and there and everywhere for something upon which they can make war. There seems to be no logical connection between the different items of the plea, and the whole movement takes on the appearance of a sort of desultory warfare against the existing religious bodies. With this great central truth in mind, the whole aspect at once changes. Instead of coming before the religious world with the implements of warfare and destruction in their hands, they come bearing in their hands the olive branch of peace. On their banner is inscribed the motto, gleaned from the prayer of Christ, "Let us be one, that the world may believe."

3. The method suggested, by which it was hoped this result could be accomplished, was simple and practical. It recognized a common underlying Christianity that existed in spite of all apparent contradictions and divisions. It accepted the fact that each great party had in keeping great truth, and it sought to lay hold of these great truths and set them in their proper relations to each other, and make them the common possession of all.

Its plan for the accomplishment of this result was to go back of all human councils and authoritative bodies; back of

Oxford, Geneva, and Rome, and stand with Christ and his apostles, and from their precepts and example learn the essential Christian teaching and practice, which must, of necessity, embrace the truth of every great Christian body. By this means, not only the great essential truths, but their true relations to each other must, necessarily, become apparent. It says whatever of truth each party has must have come from Christ and his apostles. Let us, therefore, go to the fountain head.

4. It logically stands as the climax of Protestant reformation. It recognizes the various reformatory movements as essential and harmonious parts of a great whole, and it says let the truth of each become the possession of all, and when this is brought to pass, the divine system, harmonious and consistent, will stand forth to the admiring gaze of the world.

This much to be coveted result it seeks to accomplish by restoration rather than by compromise. It confidently claims that a return to apostolic Christianity, in letter and spirit, will not sacrifice the distinctive truth of any religious people, but, on the contrary, each great truth will be set in its proper relation to all other truth, and the divine circle will be complete. Hence this movement should be denominated a restoration rather than a reformation.

The benefits resulting from this return to apostolic ground may be briefly summed up as follows: (1) Organic and spiritual union will be realized. (2) Each party will still retain its own great truth. Whatever may be lost does not belong to apostolic Christianity. (3) Each will obtain the great truth of all other parties. (4) Sectarian animosities and jealousies will disappear. (5) Christ will be exalted to his true position as the head over all things to his church. (6) The human additions and corruptions received from an apostate church will be eliminated, and all omissions will be supplied.

Before proceeding to the next point I desire to throw out a word of caution for the consideration of Disciples.



In every great religious movement there are two points of danger that need to be constantly guarded. (1) There is danger that the great central truth that furnishes the magnetic attraction by which persons are drawn into the movement shall be so magnified as to occupy the whole field of vision, obscuring other great truth. This inevitably leads to religious bigotry, and begets the sectarian spirit. (2) There is also danger that subordinate truths shall usurp the place of the great central idea, thus deflecting the movement from its original and intended line of progress, and, consequently, defeating its purpose. To this danger the Disciples are especially exposed, as any careful student of the movement, in its present condition, must see.

The original idea, the union of the people of God, can not, therefore, be too earnestly insisted upon. With this word of warning we pass to consider,—

**IV. The secondary and subordinate items of the plea that are the necessary logical outgrowth of the great central truth.**

1. First of all, the fundamental idea of the Disciples brings them face to face with the question of name.

The multitudinous sects of Christendom are each designated by a party name, and these names are in themselves divisive. A name of itself is often sufficient to perpetuate division. Party names are usually born of strife, and carry with them the animosities and bitterness of the strife out of which they have come. For this reason no sectarian name can ever be acceptable to the whole Christian world, and hence, so long as party names exist, division will exist. The Disciples have not made war upon party names because these, in themselves, were obnoxious. On the contrary, many of them are highly honorable. They oppose these names because their great distinctive principle demands it. If organic unity ever becomes a reality, the united body can not, will not, be called by a

sectarian name. There are other good reasons that might be given for opposition to party names, but we are not concerned with the question in this discussion except in its relation to the great central plea.

No name can be accepted as a designation of Christ's church except it have apostolic authority, or sanction. A study of the Scriptures will show, beyond a doubt, that the members of the apostolic church, as individuals, were called Christians, or Disciples, and that the organic body was called "The Church of Christ," or "The Church of God." "Christian Church" is not, strictly speaking, Scriptural, and it is, in some measure, misleading. "Disciple Church" is objectionable for the same reason, and besides, it is not even grammatical. Disciple is not an adjective, and should not be so used.

A great effort has been made, chiefly by the opponents of this movement, to induce this people to accept a party name. They have been nicknamed "Campbellites," and the brotherhood has been called the "Campbellite Church." They can not, however, accept this name, or any other sectarian name, without logically renouncing their plea by doing so.

They have sometimes been censured for taking to themselves the name "Church of Christ," on the ground that it savors of egotism, or bigotry; but how little ground there is for this criticism will appear when it is remembered that they do not claim to monopolize this name; they deny it to no church. On the contrary, they ask all to accept it. They simply choose to wear it because it is in harmony with the genius of their plea, and they would be glad if all who profess to be Christians would be satisfied with this simple Scriptural designation of the church, since at least one cause of division would thus disappear.

2. The Disciples by their plea are necessarily placed in opposition to all human formulations of doctrine that are made tests of fellowship.

Numerous authoritative statements of doctrine have been promulgated by the various denominations of Christendom which have been made tests of fellowship by the parties adhering to them. These creeds are of human origin, and necessarily have all the imperfections and limitations to which the human mind is subject. Doubtless all contain more or less truth, but certainly in all there is more or less admixture of error. In so far as they express human conception of truth, they are necessarily imperfect. The best human conception can be no better than the mind of which it is born, and, consequently, more or less of imperfection must attach to it. Furthermore, human conceptions are variable. They are clearer in some than in others, and in all they are subject to growth and expansion. It also follows that fallible human judgment is made the arbiter of essential truth, consequently church councils and ecclesiastical legislative bodies have differed widely in their judgment as to what constitutes the essential items of Christian truth. In all this there is ground for endless division. Whenever membership in the church is predicated on human standards, and tests of fellowship, divisions must, of necessity, be the result.

The Disciples, consequently, take strong grounds against all human creeds, claiming (1) that all such formulations are fallible and imperfect; (2) that they are without authority, since the power to legislate concerning matters of faith and practice is not vested in councils, or synods, composed of fallible men; (3) that they arise out of a misconception of the nature of Christianity, and the Christian faith. Concerning this latter point, it is held that Christianity is not a philosophy, nor a system of doctrine, but a life patterned after a divine example. Consequently the Christian faith, objectively considered, was declared to be a Divine person, in his life, work, death for sin, resurrection, and exaltation at the right hand of God; subjectively it was declared to be trust in this Divine person,

and obedience to him. It is thus lifted entirely out of the region of philosophy, or speculation, and placed alike within the reach of the proudest philosopher, or the humblest minded man. How beautifully this harmonizes with the sentiment of Christ expressed in the words: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." Faith, a trust in Christ as a Divine person, comes down to the babe line, and mounts up to the plane of the proudest philosopher, and touches every part of the intervening space. It consequently follows that there is one all-embracing question that should be propounded to everyone seeking admission into the Church of Christ, *viz.*: "Do you believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and obedience to him, should, therefore, constitute a sufficient bond of fellowship between all Christians. It is not a question of belief of doctrines, true or false, but of personal loyalty to the personal living Christ.

All will doubtless believe much of true doctrine, and all will doubtless entertain more or less of erroneous opinion, but this need not disturb the oneness that should exist by virtue of the simple faith in Christ. United in this simple faith each can grow "in knowledge of the truth," according to his capacity and opportunity, and attain continually unto larger and fuller conception of Divine truth, and unto more perfect life and character, "till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

It should be noted that this position does not forbid nor condemn human formulations of truth. On the contrary, this may well be encouraged so long as these are not made binding upon the consciences of men, and are not put forward as tests of fellowship, or set up as the gauges of soundness. Each

age may thus formulate its conceptions, and there ought, by this means, to be a continuous growth and improvement in the common stock of religious ideas as we advance from age to age. When, however, the ideas of any age, or of any body of men, are formulated and made binding upon the consciences of other men, the end of progress has come. Against this the Disciples enter a vigorous protest.

3. This plea also logically involves the questions of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

In the religious world great confusion exists in regard to these divine institutions, both in theory and practice. (1) As respects what is termed the mode of baptism, there is great diversity of practice in Protestant bodies. Some churches practice affusion, and others confine themselves exclusively to immersion. Some administer the ordinance to infants, while others limit it to believers. A like difference of opinion exists concerning its purpose or design. Some regard it as a sign of pardon, or cleansing, and still others a condition of pardon. This diversity in teaching and practice is a fruitful source of contention, and a ground of division among the children of God. (2) A like diversity of practice exists as respects the observance of the Lord's Supper. Some churches practice close communion, others open communion. Some observe the ordinance every first day of the week, while others observe it at longer intervals, varying greatly among the different Protestant bodies. Here again is a source of confusion, and a ground of division.

It follows, therefore, that those who plead for union must necessarily meet these questions. To enter upon the subject of baptism is unnecessary in this connection further than to briefly consider it in its immediate relations to the great central plea. (1) It is a very encouraging fact that amidst all the confusion that exists on the subject of baptism, there is a common ground where practically all can stand without

surrender of conscience. It is almost universally admitted by Protestant Christians that the immersion of a penitent believer is valid Christian baptism. Even those denominations that practice affusion exclusively admit the validity of immersion. It is also true that a large part of the Protestant world oppose affusion and infant baptism on conscientious grounds. The Disciples, therefore, plead with all to practice the baptism that all can accept without sacrifice of principle, or violation of conscientious convictions, and reject that baptism which all can not thus accept. This principle, if adopted, would settle the question as to subject and action. As to the question of design, they insist on using simple Bible phraseology. Peter said to the believers on Pentecost: "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." This passage evidently makes baptism a condition of pardon, which view is amply sustained by the language used in connection with other examples of conversion recorded in the Book of Acts. The Disciples have, as a people, always and everywhere, repudiated the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. In fact, they hold that doctrine to be the logical background of infant baptism, and certainly some of the creeds, if they do not openly avow the doctrine, at least lean very decidedly in that direction. Indeed, it is hard to construe some of their utterances in any other way. (2) As regards the question of the Lord's Supper, it has been the almost universal custom of the Disciples to celebrate the ordinance every first day of the week. They believe the custom to be abundantly sustained by both Scripture teaching and the practice of the early church as gathered from the apostolic records and profane history. Here and there individual churches in the various denominations have adhered to this practice, and it certainly is the only ground upon which all can conscientiously unite. As regards the

matter of open or close communion, it may be said that they hold to neither doctrine. They regard it as the table of the Lord, since he invites his people to gather around it and partake of the emblems that commemorate his broken body and shed blood. The apostolic injunction is: "Let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." It is, consequently, regarded as an individual question, to be settled by every man for himself.

4. As an outgrowth of the plea for union, the Disciples came to hold somewhat distinctive views on the subject of conversion.

On this question there seemed to be a great lack of clearness in the teaching of the religious world. Churches held vague and indistinct views, and consequently there was great diversity and often conflict in the teaching of the various churches on this important subject. No definite and invariable answer was given, by the religious teachers of the day, to the all-important question: "What must I do to be saved?" The chief items in the popular religious teaching bearing on this very practical subject may be briefly summed up as follows: (1) The doctrine of total depravity was strenuously insisted upon. It was commonly taught that man was by nature so completely depraved that he could not think a good thought, speak a good word, or do a good act until quickened by the Spirit of God. In harmony with this it was held that man could not understand the word of God until his mind was specially illuminated by Divine grace. (2) Faith was regarded as the direct and immediate gift of God. (3) Conversion was held to be a miracle accomplished by the immediate operation of the Divine upon the human spirit. (4) As an evidence of pardon, persons were led to expect ecstatic feelings, or dreams, or visions, or some miraculous token by which God would assure the soul of the exercise of his pardoning grace. Consequently, persons claiming conversion were required to

relate some wonderful, or miraculous, experience before they were admitted into the church. (5) God was represented as irreconciled, and as needing to be importuned and entreated to look with favor upon the penitent seeker for Divine clemency and mercy. Sometimes this importunity continued for **weeks** and months before the penitent seeker received the necessary assurance of Divine favor, and oftentimes persons failed altogether, and not a few were driven to infidelity, and some into insanity.

For the purpose of accomplishing the union for which they plead, the Disciples propose a return to apostolic teaching and practice, as has been said. This return has led them to the following positions on this vital question: (1) The doctrine of human depravity, or the natural sinfulness of the heart, is accepted, but the doctrine of total depravity is repudiated. It is held that man is capable of hearing and understanding the gospel without a specially enabling act on the part of God, and that, consequently, he is responsible for its acceptance or rejection. (2) Faith is declared to be the result of testimony, or of preaching the gospel, and that, consequently, the obligation to preach the gospel as the condition of faith, is laid upon the church. Numerous declarations of Christ and his apostles are cited as proof: "Go preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "God has chosen that the Gentiles, by my mouth, shall hear the words of the gospel and believe." "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (3) Conversion is regarded as a complete turning around of the individual, which is accomplished by certain definite and necessary steps, which, together with the means of their accomplishment, are divinely indicated. The first step in the process is held to be a change of heart, which is brought about by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The second step is such a change of purpose as will eventuate in a changed life, which constitutes repentance.



The third step is change of state, or relationship, which is accomplished through baptism as the divinely appointed means. It is held that this whole process, when complete, constitutes conversion. (4) The evidence of pardon is declared to be the plain statements of God's word. God in his word promises pardon under the Christian dispensation on plainly expressed conditions. Compliance on the part of the sinner with the conditions named, necessarily insures pardon. To doubt this is to call in question the Divine veracity. Ecstatic emotions should be the result of pardon, the knowledge of which is based on the immutable word of God, and not on the shifting and fluctuating currents of human feelings. Visions and dreams, as an evidence of pardon, are neither supported by the teachings of God's word, nor by the logical necessities of the case. (5) Man is represented as the irreconciled party, instead of God. The effort is, therefore, all manward to induce him to believe and accept God's pardoning mercy, so freely offered on such easy and plain conditions. Persons are taught that they can come to God and receive pardon on God's terms in the same hour of the day, as was the case in the apostolic age.

5. It may be said that the Disciples, in the advocacy of their plea, have come to hold somewhat distinctive views respecting God's word.

The Protestant world, while theoretically exalting God's word to the supreme place of authority in matters of faith and practice, virtually repudiated the doctrine in two ways: (1) Human creeds came to usurp the place that theoretically was assigned to God's word. The human creeds occupied a more important place than was given to the living oracles of God; (2) the word of God was dishonored and declared to be a dead letter unless quickened by the Divine Spirit. Such expressions as "the word alone," "the mere word," were very common, and not infrequently the word of God was declared to be utterly worthless unless vivified by some mysterious,

miraculous operation on the part of God. Moreover, it was not supposed to have different divisions devoted to different purposes and subjects. No clear distinction was drawn between the law and the gospel, and, consequently, sinners were just as liable to be sent to the Law of Moses as to the New Testament—to the Psalms of David as to the Acts of the Apostles, in order to learn the way of salvation. Furthermore, the rules by which we interpret other books, or language, addressed to the human understanding, were not supposed to have any application to the word of God. It was regarded rather as a mystery than as a revelation.

It was reserved for the Disciples, in the prosecution of their plea, to give practical emphasis to the great doctrine of Protestantism, formulated by Chillingworth, in the words, "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as the religion of Protestants." (1) This was first of all the logical result of discarding all human creeds and tests of fellowship. God's word at once rose to the place of supreme authority, which was the great doctrine of Luther, and which now for the first time was realized. (2) It was declared to be living and powerful. The doctrine was promulgated that men were made believers by the Holy Spirit, not immediately, but mediately through the word. It was also intelligently and rationally divided according to the manifest purpose of different portions, as shown by the contents, or as declared by the writers. A sharp line was drawn between the law and the gospel, the latter being regarded as the climax of the Divine revelation, to which the former led up as a pedagogue. To produce faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was shown to be the general purpose of the first four books of the New Testament. To teach men how to become Christians by showing them how believers were made under the apostolic ministry, was shown to be the leading purpose of the Acts of the Apostles. To develop individual and collective Christian life and character, was held to be the

great purpose of the Epistolary writings. The purpose in the last book was shown to be that of warning and encouragement. Sinners were, consequently, sent to the Acts of the Apostles to learn the way of salvation, instead of the Psalms of David.

However, the inspiration of the whole volume was strenuously contended for. The Old Testament was declared to be invaluable as a book of history, and as a reservoir rich in devotional and ethical literature, and as the receptacle of the types and prophecies pointing forward to and corroborative of the New Dispensation. In short, it was held that the Bible must be interpreted according to the rules and principles that apply to all language. As a revelation of God, its language is addressed to the human understanding, and must be interpreted according to the necessary laws of language and the human mind. Attention was called to the fact that in order to understand any language we must know (1) who speaks; (2) to whom the language is addressed; (3) the subject in the mind of the speaker; (4) the circumstances that called forth the language. These important rules, so self-evident and necessary, were held to apply with equal force to the language of the Bible.

We may profitably consider,—

**V. Some of the agencies at work in the religious world to-day that are indirectly contributing to the success of this great plea.**

1. First in order may be mentioned the Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, and the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. There is an undenominational idea at the bottom of all these movements that strikes a popular chord in the Christian heart. When young people, regardless of party creeds, party names, and denominational lines, meet together as servants of a common Master, and engage in a common service, and thus come into close fellowship with each other, the tendency is to permanently break down the barriers that divide. The inevitable drift

of all these movements is toward organic union, and Disciples should be the last people in the world to oppose such work.

2. Next may be placed the International Series of Sunday-school Lessons. The logical tendency of this system of Bible study is toward union. It has done, and is doing, much to bring about this result. Some of the best thinkers in the religious world have called attention to serious defects in the plan and method, and yet no other system can make any headway against it. The idea that the children of all Protestant Christians shall on the same day, at the same time, study the same portion of God's word, is immensely popular with Christian people. Disciples, of all people in the world, should support this system of lessons. The demand for change, occasionally heard in certain quarters, is utterly inconsistent with their plea for union. They may labor to overcome the defects, but they should never think of abandoning the system so long as other religious people adhere to it. They have everything to gain, and nothing to lose by continuing its use.

3. Foreign Missions may also be cited as a potent agency for union. It seems to be well-nigh impossible to successfully transport sectarianism across the Pacific Ocean. It requires great effort on the part of missionaries to keep denominational lines intact on the foreign field. The tendency among converts on the mission field is strongly toward union. There seems to be little or no sympathy with those sectarian peculiarities of which so much has been made by the Protestant world in the past. Missionaries are compelled to preach the simple story of the cross instead of the abstruse metaphysical doctrines of the creeds, which is, in fact, the Apostolic method. The reflex influence of Foreign Mission work is strongly in the direction of union, and for this reason, if for no other, every Disciple should strongly favor Foreign Mission work. The Disciples ought to be the best missionary people in the world.

4. The Christian Woman's Temperance Union may also be mentioned as tending in no small degree toward Christian union. Here, too, denominational lines are utterly disregarded by hundreds of thousands of Christian women who have banded themselves together for a common work of philanthropy and love. The tendency must be to strengthen the common Christian bonds, and to weaken sectarian ties.

#### VI. The promise of success in the results achieved.

1. The indirect results are many and encouraging. Christian union has become a popular theme in the pulpit and religious press of the day. Leading men in all denominations are beginning to speak out with boldness and clearness in the advocacy of organic union, and there is a generous response in the common Christian heart.

Sectarian prejudice is gradually growing weaker. A half century ago, the war and strife were very bitter, and such a thing as exchange of pulpits between the preachers of the different denominations was almost unknown. Now a large amount of charity and brotherly love exist, and preachers exchange pulpits with great freedom, and with pleasure to the congregations to which they minister.

The authority of creeds is growing very weak. To obtain membership in a sectarian church without formally subscribing to the creed was once impossible. Now the formal acceptance of the creed, in many cases, is not insisted upon, and it is no uncommon thing to hear persons, holding membership in some of the denominations, boasting that they have never read the creed of their church.

Coöperation in evangelization, and other forms of benevolent Christian work, is becoming very popular. This was very rare a generation ago. Much more Scriptural methods obtain in evangelistic meetings. The simplicity discoverable in the apostolic methods of making Christians is gradually being

reproduced in modern evangelization, which presents a striking contrast to the methods in vogue in the recent past.

2. The direct results are most cheering. A people numbering nearly one million have accepted this plea, and, in their organized capacity, they stand for union, and as a protest against division.

The present progress of this movement is greater than at any previous time. (1) At least fifty thousand persons are being annually added to this brotherhood. (2) Church buildings are being rapidly erected, and the cause everywhere is being placed on a more solid basis. (3) A much more compact and efficient organization is gradually being effected without in any way interfering with the liberties and independence of the churches. Effective coöperation for the spread of the gospel at home and abroad is gradually being secured. (4) Our educational work is slowly but surely being placed on a more solid basis. Our colleges are becoming better endowed; higher ideas of ministerial education obtain; and the prospect is that our future ministerial force, in quantity, quality, and preparation will furnish grounds for sincere congratulation and large expectations. (5) A literature of which we need not be ashamed has been produced, which is being constantly improved by valuable additions. That our mission is not yet completed, no one can doubt. In harmony with the divine plan and purpose, a separate organization will be needed until our great peculiar truth becomes generally recognized, and passes into the keeping of all who accept Christ as King.

That this auspicious day is rapidly approaching, all the signs of the time plainly indicate. Soon God's people will be one, in harmony with the prayer of Christ. Then the beginning of the end will have come; the condition upon which the evangelization of the world is suspended will be realized, which soon will be followed by the victorious shout of Christ's conquering legions.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CREED THAT NEEDS NO REVISION.\*

The problem of man's highest good involves the three great factors—human character, human condition, and human destiny. Whatever determines all or any of these must necessarily arrest the thought and hold the attention of men. To develop the noblest human character, to procure the best human conditions, to secure the highest human destiny, are the problems that call forth the efforts of the philanthropist, the statesman, and the theologian. The highest possible results in these directions must of necessity constitute the supreme good of man.

It is a truth evolved from human experience that the best results in human character and conduct are secured through the operation of internal forces and principles. The fountain of highest good and purest happiness lies within the soul. In harmony with this are the words of Solomon, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and the great Apostle to the Gentiles declared that "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." It follows, therefore, that the question of creed is one of supreme importance, inasmuch as this is the mainspring of human action and the dominating force in human life.

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\* This chapter consists of an address delivered in Chicago in 1893 at the World's Congress of Churches, and is published together with the other addresses of the Congress, in a volume issued by S. J. Clark, by whose consent it appears in this book. It is incorporated in this connection because it stands in logical and close relation to the preceding chapter, and in fact to the entire book. We feel it necessary, however, to say that this article was prepared independently, and even before this volume was commenced. It happens, therefore, that an occasional thought found in this article is found in substance elsewhere in this book.

It is not our purpose to discuss this question in its broadest sense, embracing as it does all possible shades of belief on all possible subjects, much of which is purely speculative and inert, exerting no influence on character or life. We hold, however, that there is an all-embracing, dominant creed that needs no revision, under the influence of which the best human conditions are realized, the highest character developed, and the happiest destiny secured.

In order to facilitate our search for this vital, essential creed, we will inquire,—

#### **I. What its characteristics must necessarily be.**

Inasmuch as we are seeking for the creed which will determine the highest good of mankind as a whole, and not merely the good of individuals or classes, we argue that,—

1. It must possess universality. A class creed is not the creed we are seeking. There are certain doctrines that seem to have peculiar charms for certain individuals or classes, and that consequently do, within a certain radius, exercise marked power; but these same thoughts, so powerful within certain limits, are apparently powerless in certain other circles. Some forms of truth attract the philosophic mind, others impress powerfully the imaginative mind, others dominate the practical mind; but the truth which we are seeking must appeal to the universal heart. No class man is the ideal man socially, politically, or religiously; no class party is the party of real patriotism; no class church is the church of God; no class creed holds in keeping the highest good of man. Profound students of history have pointed out the fact that the great races and nations have been made by some powerful dominant thought. It has been shown that Rome was made by the thought of power or government, and that she consequently became the great civil lawgiver among the nations; that Greece was made by the thought of perfection or wisdom, and



that consequently she has given us a wonderful philosophy, language, and art; that Israel had in keeping a religious idea, "One true and living God," and that consequently the mission of this people has been to give to the world a true and adequate revelation of God; that the Anglo-Saxon race has had in keeping the thought of freedom, and that consequently this people have given to men the constitutions and charters of civil and religious liberty. The creed we are seeking must not be the one or the other of these thoughts, nor must it be the thought of any single race or nation; and yet, in so far as these ideas are true and necessary to the highest good of man, it must embrace them all. It must be universal in its adaptability to the universal heart, and it must comprehend the dominant thoughts out of which happiest conditions spring.

2. It must be simple. It must come down to the level of the humblest mind. There is a common level in human comprehension and understanding on which the entire race may gather. Then, too, there are elevated plains and lofty mountains unvisited except by the favored few who are enabled to mount upward in thought as upon the wings of eagles. The creed which needs no revision must come down to the common intellectual plane of the race. The fruit that we are seeking must grow on the lower boughs of God's great tree of blessing, within the reach of the hand of a child.

3. It must be profound. It must satisfy the most grasping and comprehensive mind. It must feed the deepest intellectual and spiritual hunger, and quench the keenest intellectual and spiritual thirst. If it fail here it will lose its hold upon the thought of the world. No intellect, however gigantic, must ever pass beyond it, or its mission for that man is ended before his highest possibilities are reached.

4. It must have vitality. It must be a living, growing reality, meeting man at every point of his upward progress with satisfying power. It must never grow insipid or tasteless;

but, on the contrary, it must always answer the intellectual and spiritual appetite with keenest zest. To do this it must be capable of as much expansion as is the soul of man. It must be a vital germ, which, when planted in the soil of the heart, will develop into a great tree, occupying the whole space and yielding the entire fruitage of life.

5. It must be life-giving and practical. Its mission is to quicken the latent powers of the soul and call forth the best there is in man physically, intellectually, and spiritually. It must be potent to start man on the road to highest possibilities, and lead him onward to their achievement. In short, it must thrill the soul, touch the heart, win the affections and hold them in its all-powerful embrace. No mere speculation can do this. No purely intellectual dogma can profoundly and lastingly rule the individual. To accomplish such result the emotions must be reached, and the affections enlisted. The creed that needs no revision must of necessity possess this power.

6. It must serve as a sufficient bond of fellowship between all Christian hearts. An unprejudiced study of the great religious denominations will reveal to the candid mind that each great body has a characteristic differentiating truth. Each great religious leader has laid hold of some great truth with more or less clearness, and around this the religious sect or party has crystallized. Luther grasped the thought that God's Word was the people's book and the supreme authority in religion; Calvin grasped the idea of the Divine sovereignty; Arminius, the idea of the freedom of the human will and individual responsibility; Wesley, the idea of spiritual religion; the Campbells, the idea of the union of the people of God on the basis of simple Apostolic Christianity. A superficial view might lead to the conclusion that each religious party has crystallized about a number of peculiar tenets, but a closer study will reveal the fact that there is generally one great central truth, and that out of this, secondary or subordinate

truths have sprung; although sometimes the subordinate truth has been so emphasized as to obscure the great central thought. In order, therefore, to clearly understand a religious people, it is necessary to grasp clearly the one characteristic truth that gives meaning and significance to every other item, and by which its adherents have been separated from all other religious bodies. All differentiation, however, has not been caused by some peculiar truth. Sometimes error has been the cause of division, and just to the extent that this is true is fellowship hindered. Error can never become the basis of universal religious fellowship. Two things, therefore, are necessary in order to secure that perfect unity which is essential to our happiness, and conducive to our largest growth. First, error must be eradicated; and, second, the peculiar truth of each must become the common possession of all. The creed for which we are seeking must, therefore, be potent to displace erroneous ideas, or to so dominate the thought as to neutralize their power; and it must be so large and comprehensive that it embraces the great truth of each great religious body. Each party must see that the acceptance of this creed involves the acceptance of its own vital and essential truth, and that it therefore constitutes a sufficient basis for the broadest and fullest Christian fellowship.

7. It must furnish a model for imitation. Character is formed on the principle of imitation. Abstract rules and maxims of life can never result in the highest development. We can not imitate abstractions, nor can these hold the soul under its greatest strain. It therefore follows that laws, even though they be ever so perfect, can never save man in any high sense. Outside rules and regulations can never produce a perfect life. Herein was the weakness of Judaism. It worked from the outside largely. It was a system of external checks and restraints, never intended as a final system for all men, but merely as a restraining influence on the life of one

nation, through which the promised seed was to come. Paul says, "It was added because of transgression until the seed should come." It was imperfect as a final system, for the reason that external precepts can never produce the highest type of man. It furnished no perfect model for imitation, and inspired not the necessary love. Even the decalogue as a mere legal code must pass away. God himself can not save the world by laws written by pen or graven by chisel. Some method must be adopted that will write the laws upon the heart, and there is only one thing that will accomplish this, and that is a life. It must be a person to call forth love. The creed for which we are seeking must, therefore, in its objective phase be a person, and not an abstract doctrine or a formulated code of laws and regulations.

8. It must be an incarnation of God. If it be true that character is formed on the principle of imitation, it follows that a perfect character can only be formed by imitating a perfect model; and until perfection be reached it can not be said that the highest possibilities are attained. It seems to me clear, therefore, that the highest human development logically demands a Divine incarnation as its model, ridicule it who may. It is also true that the limitations of the human understanding demand an incarnation. We are so constituted mentally that abstractions elude us. We reach the abstract and general through the concrete and particular. For example, love embodied in an act reveals itself more clearly to our comprehension than love discussed in the abstract. It therefore follows that a clear conception of the Divine attributes demands the incarnation of these attributes, by which means they are concretely presented to the human mind. In this process a universal want is met. The desire to know God is natural and right. When Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," he expressed a widespread—nay, may I not say a universal?—desire. Admitting the existence of the Father, is

it not a universal, spontaneous cry, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us"?—sufficeth as an answer to our deepest desires and as a model for our imitation. To answer this cry has been the great purpose and effort of God. The climax of all revelation is the revelation of the Divine person, but, of necessity, it must be a matter of slow unfolding. The completest answer given concerning God during the Mosaic dispensation is mysterious in its completeness. When Moses was sent to deliver his people, and asked God on what authority he should justify his mission, he was told to say that the "I am that I am" had sent him. Wonderful utterance! Who can grasp its mysterious meaning? Complete, doubtless, and yet how incomplete as weighed in the scales of human desire and human comprehension! Self-existence neither answers my longing nor comes within the radius of my understanding. Some fuller, simpler definition must be given, or my hungry soul will never be fed. The creed for which we are seeking must reveal God in a way to meet the soul's capacities and the soul's desires.

9. It must be of such a nature that every man can readily and easily translate it into his own language without loss. There are certain forms of thought that are native to but one language. They belong to the tongue in which they are first expressed, and can not be expressed in any other language without serious loss. This is characteristic to a greater or less extent of all purely philosophical truth. Each great language has its own philosophy, and this can not be fully comprehended until it is read in its own native language. To translate it into another tongue means to destroy, in a measure, its own peculiar charm and fragrance. The only form of truth that is largely independent of translation is a life. A bare, unvarnished statement of facts that reveals a life in all its essential features is independent of the errors and limitations of translations. Truth in a life always and everywhere carries the same charm and breathes the same fragrance. It is something that

every man can read and translate for himself. It therefore follows that the creed for which we are seeking will, when found, be in the form of a life, and not in the form of a philosophical statement of doctrines.

10. It must be a full and complete revelation of the glory of God. To behold God's glory is a great necessity, for not until this is revealed to the soul will the highest ideal appear. Moses on one occasion said, "Lord, show me thy glory," and in this request he expressed the deepest necessity of the soul. It is quite equivalent to saying, "Lord, show me thy crowning excellence, the highest, grandest, completest exhibition of thyself." It meant, "Lord, show me thine own ideal realized," for the realization of the Divine ideal, must, of necessity, constitute the Divine glory. God's answer is wonderfully significant. He might have said, "Behold my power, for I am omnipotent; behold my wisdom, for I am omniscient; behold my riches, for I own all things." Power, wisdom, riches have constituted the chief glory of men. Their attainment has been the goal of human ambition. The answer that God gave is, therefore, the more striking and suggestive. "Behold," he said, "I will make my goodness to pass before thee." God's glory, therefore, lies along the line of moral excellence. It is his goodness that gives to him his crown of glory, and as this is concretely revealed to the soul, the highest possible ideal appears.

11. It must be perfect, incapable of improvement as an objective reality. While it may, yea, must, grow and expand, as the soul grows in its powers to measure and comprehend it, objectively it must be absolutely perfect. Every imperfect thing will sooner or later be revised. "*Ne plus ultra*" must be written on everything that claims exemption from revision. It follows, therefore, that the creed we are seeking has never been written by man, nor can it ever be. The best human conceptions of a perfect objective reality are necessarily imperfect.

Perfection can never be born of imperfection, the infinite of the finite. So long as our creeds are but the formulations of our conceptions of truth, or even of a life, so long will our creeds be subject to revision. We may formulate our ideas and declare them to be perfect, and for ages they may hold their place in the thought of the world. In defense of these ideas many a theological battle may be fought. On account of reverence for that which is old, or by reason of the partisanship begotten by these fierce battles, these creeds may long be held as sacred, but finally the time comes when some one has the courage to say, "My conception is larger and better; the creed, venerable and sacred as it is, must be revised." As long as men make creeds in this way, so long will this process be repeated, unless the human soul be fettered in its growth or its limitations be reached. It therefore follows that all creeds that are but the formulations of human conceptions of Divine truth, are fetters upon the growth of the soul, and stumbling blocks in the road of religious progress. Consequently, the creed for which we are seeking is not some human conception of great truth, no matter how large and noble that conception may be. Neither the so-called Apostolic Creed, nor the Athanasian Creed, nor the Nicene Creed, nor the five points of Calvinism, nor the counter points of Arminianism, nor the Westminster Confession, nor any other formulated code expressing human conceptions of Divine things, is the creed that needs no revision. These systems, no matter how much truth they may contain, have all the imperfections and limitations to which the human mind is subject. If they must exist, let them be revised and enlarged in their expression to keep pace with the enlarged conceptions of men resulting from the fuller light constantly being thrown upon the Divine truth, and the necessary growth of the human mind under the forces of education and culture and a constantly increasing Christian experience.

Having decided upon some of the necessary characteristics of the creed that needs no revision, we next inquire, —

**II. Where is the source to which we must, of necessity, look for such a creed ?**

Enough has been said to show that we are necessarily cut off from all human sources. At once we turn to the source Divine and inquire, Has God given us a creed that needs no revision ?

1. God has spoken to man in two great volumes—nature and revelation. Bearing in mind the necessary characteristics of this creed, we must see at a glance we can not hope to find it in the book of nature. This book fails in at least two important particulars. It lacks first of all the necessary simplicity and clearness. Only a few favored ones are able to interpret its message to us, and even these do not always read it alike. One looks out on the material world and says, "There is no God"; another looks up to the starry dome and piously exclaims, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Its language needs to be interpreted, and here at once is introduced the human, and consequently fallible and imperfect, element. The poet is one who, living close to the heart of nature, is able to interpret it to us in its varied and changing moods; and yet each poet brings his own message, and succeeding ages will bring new poets with new messages to thrill the soul, and each in some sense will act as a reviser of those who went before. All this bears testimony to the truth so beautifully expressed by one of our country's bards:

"To him who, in the love of nature, holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language." . . .

All past experience shows, moreover, that the deepest questions



of the soul nature has never answered, and the profoundest longings of the heart she has never satisfied.

The laboratory of the chemist has not been able to discover the nature of the mystery of life; the microscope of the anatomist has not been able to discern the soul that dwells in this tenement of clay; the telescope of the astronomer has not been able to pierce the mist that hangs upon the end of life's pathway, and reveal the land that lies beyond. Important as has been the service that great souls have performed for the race in these material realms, to discover the invisible spiritual realities has not been their mission, nor can it ever be.

2. We next turn to the book of revelation as the only remaining source of the creed for which we are seeking. Mark, I say, "the source"; for I am not of the number who hold the Bible itself to be that creed. The necessary characteristics of this creed precludes such a possibility, but the Bible must, of necessity, be the source of the divinely revealed creed. Every real student of the Bible must needs be impressed with the fact that there is a presence that fills this history, from the moment that sin entered the world, while yet man moved amidst the pristine beauties of his Edenic home, ever onward through all the wondrous unfolding and development, until the final consummation, when, amidst exultant shouts of adoring angels, the Son shall deliver the kingdom to the Father, that "God may be all in all." This presence is foreshadowed in the curse pronounced upon the serpent tempter in the language, "It shall bruise thy head." The safety to be enjoyed in him is prefigured in the ark, whereby eight souls were saved from the destruction that befell a doomed world. The universal blessing to come through him is embraced in the promise to faithful Abraham, in the words, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Jacob pointed to his coming when he said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from

between his feet, until Shiloh come." Moses announced his coming in the language, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things." David described his triumphal entrance through the gates of the eternal city when he sang, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Isaiah was thrilled with the majesty of his presence when he said, "His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Rejoicing in his complete sufficiency, he exclaimed, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money come buy and eat." Pointing to the coming beneficence, he said, "The isles shall wait for his law." Zechariah's patriotic soul was kindled with enthusiasm when he declared, "His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth." Daniel, in far-distant Babylon, looked down the ages and saw and declared the time of his supreme sacrifice. The Angel Gabriel thrilled the soul of the virgin mother when he said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore the Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The angelic messengers announced his advent in the inspiring language, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for there is born unto you this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The angels in their divine philanthropy celebrated his arrival in the eloquent song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill to men!" The Magi of the East acknowledged his presence by a long pilgrimage, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The pious Simeon, when his eyes beheld the long-expected One, said, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, O Lord, . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The stern, ascetic prophet of the wilderness

acknowledged his own inferiority when he said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" The spiritual John declared the wonderful Divine mystery in the language, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Finally, in summing up the purpose of his Gospel, he said, "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, that are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing, ye may have life in his name." He also declared the startling truth, "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Peter felt the impotency of all other helpers when he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Paul grasped the fullness of the Divine manifestation when he declared, "I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus and him crucified." Jesus recognized his own superiority when, in asking baptism of John, he said, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." He understood the human need and his own sufficiency when he said, "Without me ye can do nothing." "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." He recognized his own authority when he said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." He comprehended the scope of his mission when he said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." He announced the grandeur of his own personality and work in the language to John on Patmos, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." Finally God himself placed the seal of his own approval upon all these claims

when, on the Mount of Transfiguration, he declared, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Here, then, is the presence that fills the volume, the Divine personality that constitutes the Alpha and Omega of Divine revelation. Here is the creed that needs no revision, "for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." He could truthfully say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It is not the Bible, but it is revealed in the Bible. It is not a philosophy, but a Divine personality. It is not a human conception, but a divinely perfect revelation as embodied in a divinely perfect life.

**III. This creed meets fully and completely all the conditions named.**

1. It has the element of universality, embodying the great thoughts that have made great races and nations. Does the Jew wish to see his own great truth in all its fullness?—let him listen to Matthew while he unfolds the national idea of "one true and living God" as it shines in all his glorious perfection in Jesus the Messiah. When without prejudice he can listen to this witness as he points out the scores of prophecies fulfilled in this matchless life, he will be led to exclaim, "This is the one of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write." Does the Roman wish to behold his own national ideal of power and dominion?—let him listen to Mark, as he unfolds the life of the Almighty King and Conqueror, picturing his advent, his claim to dominion, his conflict with opposing powers, his suffering and sacrifice, by which all true domain is won, and finally the King enthroned and the universal empire established. What could more powerfully impress the mind, saturated by the Roman spirit, than the life of Jesus as portrayed by Mark? Does the Greek wish to see his national thought of perfection vividly illustrated?—let him contemplate the picture given by Luke as he paints the Perfect Man in his

advent, work, sacrifice for all men, and finally as the Saviour of all nations.\* Does the liberty-loving Anglo-Saxon wish to discover the thought underlying all charters and constitutions of liberty?—let him study the teaching and the life of him who spake as never man spake, and acted as never man acted; who in word and deed declared the greatest thing on earth to be *man*, and that, too, *intrinsically*, and apart from the accidents of wealth, wisdom, position, or power. Does the most spiritually-minded man wish to behold the highest ideal of spiritual life?—let him contemplate the character portrayed by John in all of its spiritual perfection and lofty attainment of spiritual power. The world has had many great men—large-souled, large-hearted, philanthropic men—but it has had but one absolutely universal man, and that was Jesus of Nazareth. Every other man has had limitations upon him, either in thought, or feeling, or purpose; but Jesus is without limitation. His thought, sympathy, purpose, are as broad as is humanity.

2. It is very simple. The most gigantic intellect may fail to comprehend this person in all of his Divine completeness, but a child can accept him and trust him for salvation. Here the creed strikes the lowest level. It may require great intellectual acuteness to believe in some dogmas, but to trust in a person comes within the radius of every man's power when the grounds of confidence are fully established. Therefore said Jesus, "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes." This is but to say that the faith that saves is not a matter of intellectual acuteness—otherwise but few could be blessed by it; but a matter of child-like trustfulness; and here it touches the common intellectual plane of the race.

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\* This analysis of Mark and Luke follows Gregory as given by Butler.

3. It is very profound. If it reaches down to the lowest and rises to the highest. "Hear ye him" may be said to a Newton, a Kepler, a Franklin, or an Agassiz, as well as to a simple-minded child, and all will listen with profound respect, and uncover their heads in reverence, exclaiming, "Surely, never man spake like this man!"

4. It has wonderful vitality. It grows as the soul expands. At every point of development this mighty personality meets the soul and satisfies its demands. There is never any sense of want, or feeling of disappointment. Every great question of the heart is met with an answer so profound as to satisfy the most grasping intellect, and always the impression is left upon the mind that there is more beyond. Well has he said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." To the little child he says, "I am with thee," and he suits his words and actions to the needs of the child heart; to the philosopher he says, "I am with thee," and he enters and sups with him, affording the most satisfying fellowship and companionship.

5. It is vitalizing and practical. It quickens the latent energies of the soul, and thaws the natural coldness of the heart, as the vernal sun melts the ice and snows of winter, quickening every dormant germ into new life. It not only stimulates man to highest endeavor, but it goes before him and with ever-beckoning hand says, "Come up higher." John, after he had followed its lead for many years, exclaimed, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

6. It serves as the necessary bond of fellowship between all true believers. It embraces the great religious thought of all great Christian bodies. To accept the Divine Christ is to exalt God's word to the place of supreme authority, and declare it to be the book of the people, for the book that reveals the Saviour of man must, of necessity, be the supreme

authority and the book of man. To accept the Christ is to exalt the idea of Divine sovereignty, for such a faith lays hold of him who said, "All authority in heaven and on earth is given unto me." To believe in Jesus is to magnify human responsibility, in that it accepts him who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." To believe in Jesus is to exalt spiritual religion, for it lays hold of him who said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come, but if I go away I will send him unto you." "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world can not receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." To believe in Jesus is to lay hold of practical, spiritual Christianity, resting on the two great pillars of Divine power and human coöperation. To believe in Jesus is to magnify the idea of the union of the people of God, since it is a reliance on him who said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for all them also who shall believe on me through their word, that they also may be one." It is to accept the doctrine that all are one in God by virtue of faith in Christ, and hence brethren whom no barriers erected by man should divide.

7. It furnishes a perfect model for imitation. It seeks to regulate life, not by abstract principles or outward expressions of law, but by giving to man a perfect pattern for imitation. Paul realized the nature of this creed and its concrete excellence when he said, "Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ." It begets the love out of which all true life and action must spring, by presenting to the heart of man "the chiefest among the ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely," that he may win our affections, and thus mold us into the Divine image.

In practical results it accomplishes all that is theoretically demanded of it. Under its magic influence a man capable of profane blasphemy becomes a bold, courageous Peter; a son of thunder, a loving, gentle John; a bitter persecutor, a heroic Paul. But should we fail to see a single instance of absolute perfection, at least let us remember that "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a Perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

8. It is an incarnation, and in this it meets the constitutional demands of the soul. It is God manifest in the flesh, God on the plane of human life. Divine power, wisdom, goodness, mercy, and love are revealed in a divinely powerful, wise, good, merciful, loving Being, that stands upon the human plane and declares, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." How the hideous, distorted, unnatural, revolting views of God are dispelled as we see him when he reveals himself in the incarnation, which is the only revelation perfectly adapted to the capacities and powers of the soul! He who ridicules the incarnation shows himself to be profoundly ignorant of his own powers. He knows not what manner of man he is; but God, who made the soul, knows its capacities and limitations, and adapts his revelation of himself to the creature he has made. In this incarnation the desire to know God is fully satisfied. The definition given to Moses, so profound, and yet so cold and disappointing, after ages of waiting is now completed in a way to gratify, yea, thrill, the heart. No longer is God content to say to man's inquiring soul, "I am that I am," but to the hungry he says, "I am bread"; to the thirsty, "I am water"; to the sick, "I am the great physician"; to those conscious of their need of care, "I am the



good shepherd"; to the lost, "I am the way"; to the homeless, "I am the door"; to the seeker after knowledge, "I am the truth"; to those living in fear of death, "I am the resurrection and the life."

9. It can be easily read by all men. Love has been called the universal language, and Jesus, the Son of God, is but the expression of God's love. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life." This vital, essential truth is the soil in which all the trees of heavenly planting grow. This love of God expressed in Jesus is the great central luminary from which all other orbs of truth borrow their light. This truth as expressed in a life of loving action can be understood by all; and, therefore, it is said, "His life was the light of men." Herein lies the reason why Jesus did not write a book on ethics, or promulgate a philosophy of truth. In order to present the vital truth, out of which noblest character, best conditions, and highest destiny spring, in a way that all can grasp it and understand it, he simply embodied it in a life. Truth thus expressed is not at the mercy of the translator, nor is it circumscribed by the limitations of any language.

10. It completely reveals the glory of God, and in so doing places before man the highest possible ideal of life. God declared to Moses that his goodness was his glory, but as an abstraction this could not be comprehended by man. He therefore placed his goodness before us in the concrete. He embodied it in a person. Paul therefore says, "He [Christ] was the effulgence of his [the Father's] glory and the express image of his substance." He also says, "We, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." This creed would correct all false standards of human greatness. It shows us that the highest possible excellence is

independent of any adventitious circumstance. It is reached by a gradual process—by passing from glory to glory until the Divine ideal is realized in man.

11. It is perfect. In this creed no imperfection has ever been discovered. The strongest light of criticism has revealed no flaw. It fills the soul and meets the highest expectations. The most fertile imagination can suggest no improvement. Pilate declared, "I find no fault in him," and after eighteen centuries this verdict is reaffirmed by the wisest and best men. The risen Lord, the living, loving Redeemer, the Divine Christ, is "the all in all"; he constitutes the all-sufficient portion of the soul. This is the rock Jesus referred to when he said, "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Therefore, the all-embracing, all-sufficient question is, "Do you believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?" The confession of this truth is a declaration that the soul has laid hold upon Christ by faith, and when this is done, it has a creed that needs no revision. To accept this and all that it involves, is to build upon the foundation referred to by Paul in the language, "Other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

#### IV. The benefits resulting from such a creed.

1. Its acceptance produces a feeling of restfulness and confidence. Everything in the world around us with which we come in daily contact is subject to change. There is nothing that has in it the stable, enduring quality. The words "passing away" seem to be written upon all material things. Human life is made up of an unending round of changes. The widest extremes in condition are brought very close together. The lights and shades of life are wondrously and strangely blended. Amidst all this fluctuation and change the soul hungers for something that is fixed and enduring. It yearns for some

stable, sure foundation upon which to build its hopes, some unchanging object on which to place its affections. This creed answers this deep yearning, and fully meets this ardent desire. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever" is the rock that endures amidst all the changing vicissitudes of time. In him there is a safe harbor, a secure resting-place for the soul amidst the tempests of life.

2. It will deprive infidelity of its most powerful weapon. The life of Christ is an unanswerable argument in favor of Christianity, yea, of the Bible itself. When Christ is seen to be the great central object in the Bible, and the true ideal of Christian life, all contentions about minor, unimportant details will necessarily cease. When Christ is magnified and held up as "the all in all," this one colossal figure will hold the attention of men. Then it will be seen that Christianity is not a philosophy, nor a system of doctrines, nor an evanescent sigh, nor a vapory tear, but a real life lived, word spoken, and action done—a living reproduction of the Divine Christ in the lives of men. To this form of Christian argument there is no answer. Then trials for heresy will be impossible, because the real heresy, a false life, will be its own condemnation.

3. It will make the modern pulpit apostolic. In studying the apostolic models of preaching, one can not fail to be impressed with the entire absence of anything like speculative theology. The apostles never dwelt on metaphysical definitions, or formal statements of what, in their judgment, constituted the essential points of Christian faith. The one essential item that was never omitted was a crucified and risen Redeemer. Personal trust in a personal, living Christ was the one thing essential. If this faith eventuated in action, it was living; if not, it was dead, and there the analysis ended. If a man preached Jesus he preached the faith. If he persecuted Jesus, or his followers, he destroyed the faith. If he obeyed Jesus, he was obedient to the faith; and if he forsook Jesus,

he forsook the faith. To believe on Jesus, and obey him, was salvation; to disbelieve was damnation. Paul may have had theories concerning the Trinity, the incarnation, the atonement, inspiration, and many other intricate theological questions, but he never intimated that belief in any of these theories constituted Christian faith, or any part of Christian faith. The Christian faith, objectively considered, was a crucified and risen Saviour. This creed never needed revision. It was the same in Athens that it was in Philippi; the same in Rome as in Corinth. Subjectively, it was a personal trust in the risen, living Christ. When the Christian pulpit shall return from its metaphysical speculation concerning the unknown and unfathomable mysteries connected with God and his wondrous system of salvation to the simplicity of the Gospel, the sermons will have the Pauline and Petrine ring, and Pentecostal results will be seen. Nay, these results are seen to-day in proportion to the fidelity with which preachers adhere to this simple creed.

4. It will marry in divorceless union faith and action. It is very common to hear men say, "It makes no difference what a man believes, if he only does right." This declaration is based on the assumption that there is no necessary relation between faith and life. If theological dogmas constitute the real essence of a true life, this would seem to be in some measure true, for people professing to believe the most contrary doctrines, are very similar in life. In actual practice the Calvinist and Arminian are one. Both pray to the same God, through the same Mediator. Both preach the same gospel, and demand the same obedience, and teach the same practical Christian duties. Both go to the very ends of the earth with the message of salvation, and pray as if all depended on God, and act as if all depended on man. Is it any wonder that some have said, "It makes no difference what a man believes, if he only does right"? But a closer scrutiny will reveal the

fact that behind the tenets about which men dispute, there is a vital creed that rules the life in its larger aspects and grander currents that all possess in common. This creed is simply Christ in the heart, of which the words, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," are the best verbal expression. This is the vital creed behind all true Christian life.

5. It will destroy the necessity for all other creeds. One great object of creed-makers has been to embody, in formulated doctrines, the essential truths. They have sought to be comprehensive in their statements. The Bible has been culled, and its great doctrines been laid hold upon according to the mental grasp and comprehension of the various theological teachers, and expressed with various degrees of vigor and clearness—oftentimes, however, in language utterly incomprehensible to the common mind. To reject any of these has seemed, to their adherents, to be a rejection of essential truth. Hence good men, in order to preserve the purity of the faith, have become religious polemics and heresy-hunters. This has been the seed fruitful of persecutions, and all the train of religious follies that have wasted the church and cursed the world. Here, too, is born the necessity for revised creeds and new formulations, in order to keep pace with the new views and enlarged conceptions of truth that necessarily come to the true student of God's word. There must be, there is, a better way. Some creed must be found so expansive, so all-embracing, so clearly formulated, that it will swallow up in itself not only the truths of all other creeds, but all new truths and all larger conceptions that the future may have in keeping must be embraced in it. Such a creed was given to us by Jesus in his answer to Pilate, when he confessed himself to be the Son of God, thus expressing the very essence of his personality. This Paul calls the good confession, and it constitutes the sum total of all Bible truth. To accept it means to accept

Jesus in his three-fold office of Prophet, Priest, and King, wherein he meets man with deliverance at his three great points of weakness: as a Prophet, to save man from his ignorance; as a Priest, to save him from his sin; as a King, to rule his life and save him from death. Does the objector say it is not comprehensive? Let him sit down and write until he has formulated every possible essential Christian truth according to his best conception. With prophetic vision let him look down the future and drag from its keeping the loftiest, deepest, grandest conception that will be born of the human mind; and when he is done, all, and more, will be embraced in the simple Divine formula, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," because it is an expression of faith in him who said, "I am the truth."

6. It will obliterate all artificial and arbitrary distinctions that dishonor and degrade our common humanity, and it will bring about a practical recognition of the great truth that out of one blood God hath made all nations that dwell on the face of the earth. The oriental nations are cursed by caste; the occidental nations by class distinctions. Even in democratic America we hear much said about higher and lower orders of the people; and unfortunately, these distinctions are based on the purely accidental circumstances that attach to humanity. The inherent ~~dignity~~ and nobility of man, as such, are entirely lost sight of, or ignored. There needs to be a great leveling process. These artificial barriers must needs be swept away, and this work, so necessary to the highest good of man, this creed that needs no revision is destined to accomplish. The Carpenter at Nazareth, in whose estimation a single humble soul was worth more than all the world beside, is destined to lead this humanity up to the fullest recognition of the dignity and nobility of man, as such, and to bring all men onto the plane of universal brotherhood, not by degrading all to the lowest level, but by lifting all to the highest possible plane of

human character and worth. His leveling process is a lifting process, that draws all men up to the sublime heights of moral grandeur on which he stands, and from which he reaches down to lift up a world.

7. It will unite the children of God in the strong bond of universal Christian fellowship. Too long already the efforts of God's people have been paralyzed; the resources of the church wasted; the spiritual joys of believers marred by unseemly strife. Too long has spiritual intercourse between the people of God been hindered by unholy divisions. It is high time that the oneness of God's people—the condition upon which the conversion of the world is suspended—were realized. When the essential creed of Christendom shall be reduced to a simple personal trust in a divine personal Saviour, this result, so much to be coveted, will be attained. Then the auspicious day for which Christ prayed, and to which all generous Christian souls are looking, will appear. Then the dominion of the King will spread "from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth." Then will ascend the shout of victory that will be answered back by exultant angels: "Hallelujah, the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth!" The redeemed world will then rejoice in the "Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The lion and the lamb will lie down together, and peace, like the mighty ocean, will hold all lands in its embrace.

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